THE PROBLEM OF TWO TRUTHS IN BUDDHISM AND VEDĀNTA

Edited and Introduced by

MERVYN SPRUNG

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL NOTE

The papers published in this volume were originally read and discussed at a workshop which the Philosophy Department of Brock University brought together at the Rathfon Inn on Lake Erie in the spring of 1969. The papers have survived, but the discussions, despite attempts to record and edit them, unhappily have not. Only some memories of the tensions and laughter of philosophical combat remain and they are not for publication.

The workshop, which was funded by Brock University and The Canada Council, had, as working members, not only those who read papers but others with an interest in the problems of Indian and comparative philosophy:

George Burch, Professor Emeritus of Tufts University; David Goicoechea and Professor John Mayer of Brock University; Mr. Elvin Jones, University of Wisconsin; Professor Karl Potter, University of Washington; Mr. C. D. Priestly, University of Toronto; Professor Dale Riepe, State University of New York at Buffalo, and Professor Paul Younger of McMaster University.

Dr. Wilhelm Halbfass of Brock University generously assisted in transcribing the Sanskrit quotations.

ABBREVIATIONS

(1) MK.	*Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* de Nāgārjuna avec La Prasannapadā Commentaire de Candrakīrti. Publiée par Louis de la Vallée Poussin, St. Petersbourg 1913. Composed, probably, in the second century A. D. Nāgārjuna's Kārikās are indicated, throughout the volume, by Chapter and number. Thus, MK. I. 1. indicates Chapter I, Kārikā 1.
(2) Prasannapadā	Candrakīrti's commentary to MK. Composed, probably, in the sixth or seventh century A.D. All references are to the text published along with MK. by de la Vallée Poussin. Thus Prasannapadā 1.1 indicates page 1, line 1.
(3) MA	*Madhyamakāvatāra* by Candrakīrti. Tibetan text published by de la Vallée Poussin in the *Bibliotheca Buddhika* IX, 1912. Chapter 6 reconstructed in Sanskrit by N. Ayasvami Shastri and published in the *Madras Oriental Series*, no. 4, 1929.
(4) MHK	*Madhyamakahṛdayakārikās* by Bhāvaviveka. Composed, probably, in the sixth century A.D. Preserved only in Tibetan.
(5) BCA	*Bodhicaryāvatāra* by Śāntideva. Composed, probably, in seventh or eighth century A.D. Published by de la Vallée Poussin in the *Bibliotheca Indica*, 1902-1914.
(6) BCAP	Commentary (Pañjikā) on BCA by Prajñākaramati. Published along with BCA.

INTRODUCTION

It would be a bulky and intricate volume indeed that treated adequately of the problem of two truths in Buddhism and Vedānta: the present volume is slim and unpretentious. Not the less incisive, for that, it is hoped, but certainly neither systematic nor complete, and this in several senses. Not all schools of Buddhism are dealt with: Theravāda, Indian Yogācāra, and the Logicians are missing among the Indian schools and there is no reference to Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. The Vedānta discussed is only Advaita (non-dualist), and that virtually limited to Śaṅkara. Nor does the volume as a whole take up the problem of two truths thematically, though each paper raises the philosophical questions its author thinks appropriate.

The title 'The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta' promises more than the book itself contains. The reason for this is given in the prefatory 'Note': each chapter is a paper read and discussed at a working conference. All the papers from the conference are here published, and no others. The book has thus the contours dictated by the availability of scholars at the time of the conference.

The titles of the papers betray the purpose of the original gathering and the nature of the resulting book. Every paper inquires into an *historical* point of view – one or more of the Buddhist or Vedānta schools – and yet does this in such a way that it is not mere exposition, but focusses on the philosophical problems raised. Nothing published here follows the problem in its transformations through all the historical points of view – though T. R. V. Murti and J. G. Arapura compare Advaita Vedānta and Mādhyamika Buddhism in suggestive ways. Yet just this task is implicit in the title of the book, as it is in the endeavours of what is at present called – not entirely happily – 'comparative philosophy'. We make but few references to Western thought – T. R. V. Murti to Kant and Hegel, myself to Plato and Descartes, B. K. Matilal to contemporary Western logic – and yet that the 'problem' is recognizable in such various historical schools is evidence that it is a genuine philosophical problem. The belief that it is lies behind the work of those contributing, as behind the hope that philosophers will read this volume and not merely sanskritists and specialists in Indian thought. The book is liberally besprinkled with Sanskrit

M. Sprung (ed.), Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta. 1-8.

terms, it is true, but not, it is hoped, to the point of frightening off those unfamiliar with that elegant language. May the presence of Sanskrit speak merely of the chthonic method of the contributors. They hope their work may find some echo in the problems with which Western philosophers – some at least – are locked, and that it may suggest new ways of thinking about 'levels of truth', 'limits of thought', 'the possibility of metaphysics' and cognate questions.

The present volume is a modest contribution to the problem of 'two truths', a theme which could and should be more thoroughly pursued. The views found in the Upaniṣads would be richly worth inclusion in this theme. The tension between the rival claims of the seen and the unseen makes the problem of two truths worth pursuing there. Sāṃkhya would have something to say, more, perhaps, by throwing the Vedānta understanding of consciousness and its everyday forms into sharper focus. Tantric thought, and the various Shaivite schools, might (the field is still relatively unexplored) generate some light on the relationship of the phenomenal world to the creative powers within and behind it. Yet, probably, the thought of certain Buddhists of the early centuries of the Christian era – those known as Mādhyamika – and the deep, central tradition of the Upaniṣads, transmitted by Śaṅkara and his followers from the eighth century A. D. onwards, go most radically into the problems of two truths. It is they who search out the indefeasible questions of the nature of truth and of its availability to humans, who sense the implications of our being able to raise such questions for the nature of human existence and for the character of what sustains it.

It is then perhaps not mere chance that virtually all the papers in the present volume take up aspects of the problem of two truths as dealt with in these two traditions – Mādhyamika Buddhism and Advaita Vedānta. Historically this focusses attention on the centuries between 150 A. D. and 900 A. D. when Indians were most creatively exploring the problems of thought that has become aware of itself as Thought. The roots of the two truths lie, of course, far back in the Upaniṣads, which may usefully be dated in the centuries from 800 B. C. to 500 B. C. But most of the discussion here is based on texts composed in the later period. Nāgārjuna, considered the founder of the Mādhyamika School of Buddhist philosophy, is one of the main protagonists and is dated in the latter half of the second century A. D. His two main – and rival – interpreters are Bhāvaviveka, sixth century A. D., whose work is preserved only in Tibetan; and Candrakīrti, end of sixth and beginning of seventh century, whose

commentary is intact in Sanskrit. Sankara, the other main protagonist, is the founder of the Advaita Vedānta School and is dated in the latter part of the eighth and beginning of the ninth century A. D. He had many followers in the immediately succeeding centuries.

The diversity of aspects which draw the attention of the different contributors is an index of the complex interest of the problem. Most papers say something about the way Mādhyamika understands the two truths. T. R. V. Murti adopts what might be called a gnoseological (not epistemological) approach. He places the problems of knowing in the centre; he understands what Mādhyamika is saying (or doing) in terms of the model of knowing. He defines *saṁvṛti* (everyday existence) and *paramārtha* (reality or truth) as different kinds of knowing: the first, discursive and conceptual (*buddhi*); the second, immediate and intuitive (*prajñā*). *Buddhi* is inherently antinomical and hence unsatisfactory; *prajñā* is beyond contradictions and hence secure.

Fred Streng is concerned with questions of human existence. He does not see the *paramārtha* level as a second and transcendent 'truth' which would leave the *saṁvṛti* level abandoned as 'lower'. *Paramārthasatya* is the highest awareness of the truth ensconced in *saṁvṛti*; it is the view of *saṁvṛti* which most effectively leads to liberation and its 'truth' is precisely this effectiveness.

My own paper attempts to bring out the relationship between the two 'truths' – which, in my interpretation, are more nearly two 'realities'. This relationship appears to me to be transformational and not explanatory. The highest truth is not an explanation of the lower; it is what the lower becomes (hence the appropriateness of the word 'reality') under the conditions of freedom.

B. K. Matilal's logical critique of the Mādhyamika position reminds of yet another aspect. *Saṁvṛti*, understood as what is *śūnya* (void) is, by definition, logically indeterminate: no precise predicate can be asserted of anything because there is no 'thing' in the everyday world adequate to accept predicates. The *paramārthasatya* then can be only a species of non-predicative, intuitive 'truth'. This opens the door to mysticism, understood in contradistinction to realist logic.

S. Ida reminds us of the intricacies of scholarship required to study the many branches of thought within the Mādhyamika school. He deals with the evidence, from Tibetan sources, of Bhāvaviveka's clearly developed theory of the graduated levels of truth (which provokes comparison with Plato). He contrasts Bhāvaviveka's primary concern with gradations within

saṁvṛti and Candrakīrti's strong assumption of the equal devoidness of *all saṁvṛti* levels.

A. K. Warder's arguments against considering Nāgārjuna a Mahāyāna Buddhist will provoke both interest and disagreement. He reminds us, tellingly, how easily we lapse into uncritical acceptance of views which happen to be widely held. Certainly it is important to realize, as he points out, that Nāgārjuna nowhere in his main work, the *Madhyamaka Kārikās*, quotes, verbatim, any Mahāyāna scripture; even though this leaves untouched the question whether Nāgārjuna's philosophy is Mahāyāna in its concern and content or not.

Herbert Guenther sets out the variety of views held about the two truths in the Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika and Yogācāra schools, all from Tibetan sources. He emphasizes that the third and highest 'truth' of Yogācāra – the *pariniṣpanna* – is not a realm apart from other levels, but is the non-mediated and aesthetic aspect of everyday things. This introduction of the notion of the aesthetic as a way of understanding the difference between the truths is novel and intriguing.

Richard Brooks subjects the Vedānta concept of *māyā* – which must be set, however carefully, in parallel with the Buddhist concept of *saṁvṛti* – to some contemporary analysis. He argues that to claim the entire pluralistic world is an illusion – *māyā* – sets up a philosophical problem but does not solve it. It implies that there is a criterion for knowing what is illusion and what is not, but does not give it. He suggests that Vedantists should attempt the breathtaking task of showing *how* the world is an illusion.

In the final chapter, J. G. Arapura gives us to understand *māyā* as discourse about Being or *Brahman*. The world as we understand it is related to its Being as discourse is related to what discourse is about. This is a fresh, contemporary approach to Vedānta and it allows Mādhyamika to be compared from the point of view of language. Mādhyamika, J. G. Arapura states, does not agree that everyday talk reveals the paramarthic, buddhist truth, but, rather, conceals it. Talk, for Mādhyamika, he suggests, is merely about talk, from which futile circle escape can be only to the non-linguistic level. This is an interesting comparison; there will be those who understand Mādhyamika differently and who will take up the discussion.

The only other chapter in which there is explicit comparison of Vedānta and Mādhyamika is the first. T. R. V. Murti assesses both schools as philosophies concerned with the central problem of accounting, in metaphysically acceptable terms, for our mis-taking everyday things to be real as they present themselves, when, on being awakened to truth, we

know that their reality is not in themselves but in their ground – which is never the everyday itself. On this score he finds he must give Vedānta first place. These learned and vigorous arguments are certain to provoke further thought, especially as they rouse questions of the historical and doctrinal relationship of Buddhism and Vedānta. There will be those who think that Buddhist philosophy is not primarily concerned with the Vedantic problem, but, being radically oriented toward 'behaviour', is more sceptical of the ability of language to give metaphysical explanations. Such can point out that the Vedantist can aspire to 'know' *Brahman*, but that a Buddhist is not concerned to 'know' *nirvāṇa*. The inviting depths of these questions make one regret that they are not searched out in the present volume. Certainly they lie waiting for future discussion.

And not merely as esoteric problems of Indian philosophy. The issues which emerge from a probing into the questions of *māyā* and *saṁvṛti*, *Brahman* and *paramārthasatya* are human and indefeasible; they have weight for philosophers everywhere. That they have been central in the Indian tradition and, until recently, peripheral in the Western, can tell us much about the two traditions. The Indians have two *truths* as a philosophical problem because they do not sunder faith and reason, but embrace all questions – including what in the West would be 'religious' questions – within the reach of philosophical thought. Hence religious experience and insight thrust forward the problem of two truths indefeasibly. In the West, because for the greater part we have held our religious faith to be of a different order than our philosophical convictions, we have had little need to see things in terms of two *truths*: we are content with one *truth* and one *faith*.

Yet the problem of *kinds* of truth is not entirely absent from Western thought. Perhaps we could come to understand some thinkers better if we see them in this light. The two 'ways' of Parmenides, for example, the 'way' of being and the 'way' of non-being or the way of thought and the way of opinion, are these analogous to two 'truths' or 'realities'? Certainly they are not dualist principles, not mere theories, for not both are 'true' or 'real' in the same sense: one excludes the other. That the duality is of 'ways', and not of 'views' within one 'way', reminds of Plato and Buddhism. Understanding the middle Plato, the Plato of the ascent of the psyche from darkness to light, in terms of two truths is more obvious; yet a thorough elaboration is still wanting. How interesting a re-study of the gnostic belief in a saving insight-experience (gnosis) would be must await further work.[1]

European mysticism should be interesting in this regard precisely be-

cause mystics reject the duality of God and truth. Eckhart, the thirteenth century Christian, speaks confidently of the silent desert (void?) of *Gottheit* beyond the reach of the differentiations of *intellectus*. His *allerhöchste Wahrheit* (the most high truth) reminds of the Sanskrit *paramārthasatya* being beyond all specifiable content and not being merely a categorial distinction within a theory. Again, Eckhart insists that creatures have being only if God is present in them, otherwise they are nothing. This contrast can (with caution), be set next to *māyā* and *saṁvṛti* in their contrast to *Brahman* and *paramārthasatya*. Other Christian mystics have something to say about the puzzling fact that things can be either full of or empty of being, depending on how we live with them.

Spinoza appears to have evolved his philosophy out of some such deep-seated sense of the transformational possibility of existence. His third kind of 'knowledge' – intuition – is not merely another kind of knowledge about particular things in space and time; it is 'knowledge' of a quite different reality: namely, of 'God' which is to say of particular things in their timelessness. This intuition, especially of one's own body and mind as God, is at once love of God and God's love of himself. One cannot *reason* one's way back and forth between God and the finite world. Malebranche is another for whom 'God' is a philosophical problem.

In recent time, at least one philosopher has had much to say in English that is germane to the puzzlements of the two truths: F. H. Bradley. Bradley, using the concepts 'appearance' and 'reality', discusses exhaustingly how it is that, though reality contains nothing but appearances, yet appearances are transmuted in reality (the 'absolute'). No particular remains what it is, but all are 'over-ruled by', 'go home to', are 'laid to rest in' the absolute. Of course there is a myriad of differences between Bradley, the post-Hegelian empiricist, and any Indian parallels. Yet the similarities between his basic concepts and those of Mādhyamika are striking, and have often been noted. Bradley's absolute has no assets but appearances, though with appearances only to its credit, the absolute would be bankrupt. This is compatible with Nāgārjuna's famous aphorisms "there is no ontic difference whatever between *nirvāṇa* and *saṁsāra*" and "all named things come to rest in the truth."

Most worthy of attention – in this matter of two truths – among recent Western thinkers is Martin Heidegger. Not only does his early insistence that Being is not to be grasped as any variation of particular beings point in this direction, but his later work might be understood as a struggle to *think* what is beyond representational thought and to *say* what is be-

yond the language of metaphysics. The 'difference' between (source of?) Being and beings is itself neither, but results in both, and cannot be spoken of in language commonly used for either. It can be heard only in the voice of silence. Heidegger's insistence, in his later work, that the root of representative discourse lies in the rootless activity of human will, that only in *Gelassenheit* – non-purposive existence – can Being become one's own is, for a European, a novel treatment of the classical problem of two truths, though it rests easily within both the Buddhist and Vedānta traditions.

And so Heidegger cannot escape comparison with the two great thinkers of India: Nāgārjuna the Buddhist, and Śaṅkara the Vedantist. Nāgārjuna's *nirvāṇa* is beyond the categories of being and non-being, yet is what makes both intelligible; and he treats the human cravings generated by belief in the being and non-being of things as the one obstruction on the way to truth. Śaṅkara's *Brahman,* the sustaining source of *māyā* (phenomena), can, in many ways, be understood as one understands Heidegger's *Sein*; Brahman is 'known' – not representationally but in a special experience – only when one has ceased to find Self in one's personal existence (cf. *Gelassenheit*).

To bring the names of Heidegger, Śaṅkara and Nāgārjuna together may be the fitting conclusion to this introduction. Insofar as it is appropriate it is evidence of the persistence of the problem of two truths. Taken together the three can make us see what the problem is. All are haunted by the conviction that 'beyond' the everyday world (*'vorstellendes Denken'*, *'saṁvṛti'* or *māyā*) there is something not of the nature of the everyday which alone can allow us to understand the everyday. All are acutely aware of the limitations of language (though Heidegger and Śaṅkara preserve a confidence which Nāgārjuna does not share) and yet persist in the effort to find some acceptable way of speaking about what is in some sense unspeakable. Whether it is in *Gelassenheit* (Heidegger) that language becomes appropriate to Being or whether (Nāgārjuna) words taken in a prescriptive sense (*prajñapti*) may refer to *paramārthasatya* or whether (Śaṅkara) discourse may be about *Brahman* if the mind is disciplined and purified, the second 'truth' becomes available only if certain non-intellective conditions are fulfilled. How trenchantly this thought drops into contemporary debate about the possibility of metaphysics and the nature and legitimation of philosophy is self-evident.

The present book does not, as I have said, make a concerted attempt to carry over the problem of two truths into the Western tradition. It is directed to the problem as it appears in certain schools of Buddhism and

Vedānta. Yet the contributors hope that the questions they raise are worth further study, within the Indian tradition as well as in other traditions. They hope, presumptuously perhaps, yet innocently, that further study of the problems evoked in this book may nudge the horizons of philosophy outwards just a little.

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NOTE

[1] Cf. *Stufen der Wahrheit* by Dieter Dunkel. Akademie Druck. München.

T. R. V. MURTI

SAṀVṚTI AND PARAMĀRTHA IN MĀDHYAMIKA AND ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

It has been the fashion to consider that the differences between the Mādhyamika *śūnyatā* and *Brahman* are rather superficial and even verbal, and that the two systems of philosophy are almost identical. At least Professor Radhakrishnan thinks so, and Stcherbatsky's and Dasgupta's views are not very different. I hold a contrary view altogether: that in spite of superficial similarities in form and terminology, the differences between them are deep and pervasive. Both Mādhyamika and Advaita agree that the absolute is transcendent to thought, totally devoid of empirical determinations (*nirdharmaka, śūnya*). "The Absolute is immanent too, being the reality of appearance. The Absolute is but the phenomena in their essential form. It follows that the absolute is realised only in a non-empirical intuition called variously, *prajñāpāramitā, lokottarajñāna,* and *aparokṣānubhūti.* The nature of this experience is that it is non-discursive, immediate and unitary cognition; here essence and existence coincide. They further agree with regard to the nature and status of phenomena which are appearance. Engendered by a beginningless non-empirical *avidyā,* the appearance can be negated completely by the true knowledge of the absolute. The nature of *avidyā* and its orientation to the absolute differ in each system. Every absolutism is really an *advaita* or *advayavāda,* non-dualism; they do not establish the absolute, but just reject duality as illusion. And the rejection is dialectically made and not on the basis of positive arguments. Otherwise, *that* on the strength of which the absolute is established will stand out as another reality. What is rejected as illusory differs in these systems: the Mādhyamika negates the conceptualist tendency (*vikalpa* or *dṛṣṭi*); for this is what falsifies reality which is Intuition (*prajñā*); the Vijnānavāda negates objectivity; for this makes *vijñāna* appear infected with the duality of subject and object; the Vedānta negates difference (*bheda*); the real is universal and identical.

By implication every absolutism has to formulate the distinction of Reality and Appearance and the two truths (*paramārtha* and *vyavahāra*). Scriptures too are interpreted on this basis – *nītārtha* (*para*) and *neyārtha* (*apara*). The Vedantic doctrine of three 'truths' and the admission of the

M. Sprung (ed.), Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta. 9-26.

prātibhāsika is necessitated by the fact that it first analyses an empirical illusion (an illusion which is cancelled in our ordinary experience even) and applies this analysis analogically to the world-illusion. The position of Vijñānavāda is similar. The Mādhyamika, however, addresses himself directly to the world-illusion as presented in the conflicting philosophies and points of view. He is concerned with what has been called by Kant the Transcendental illusion.

All three agree in their ideal of spiritual discipline. It is knowledge (*prajñā*, *brahmajñāna*) that frees us; other factors are auxiliary to this. The state of *mukti* (*nirvāṇa*) is a complete identity with the Absolute."[1]

I. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MĀDHYAMIKA AND VEDĀNTA

(1) It must not be forgotten that the Vedānta and the Mādhyamika belong to two different traditions – the *ātman* tradition of the Upaniṣads and the *anātman* tradition of the Buddhists. The Vedānta is a complete and consistent formulation of the *ātman* doctrine of the Upaniṣads which conceive reality as pure being, as not subject to change and as one identical universal being. *Brahman* is the soul or spirit of things, their essence or reality. Change and particularity are taken as appearance of the underlying *ātman* or *Brahman*. This I have called the substance view of reality.

As opposed to this, Buddhism began with the rejection of the soul or substance and conceives the real, as becoming, as a continuum of momentary entities. The Vibhajyavāda of Buddhism is the critical analysis of concepts and linguistic usage. It rejected and relegated soul, substance, the universal and the whole as mere words without any backing in fact. The Mādhyamika philosophy is the complete and consistent formulation of the sceptical attitude that was born with Buddhism. Not only is the soul or substance unreal (*pudgalanairātmya*) but the so-called 'elements', accepted by the earlier Ābhidharmika Buddhism is equally false (*dharmanairātmya*). Denial or rejection must be complete; everything is *śūnya*, void or devoid of any intrinsic nature of its own (*niḥsvabhāva*). The Mādhyamika dialectic is the most consistent and complete formulation of the critical analysis which began with Buddhism.

Although there have been lively skirmishes between the two traditions, there has been no comingling or compromise of positions on either side to any appreciable extent. It is my contention that there could not be acceptance of any doctrinal content by either side from the other as each had a totally different background of traditions and conception of reality. The

Vedantists stake everything on the *ātman* (*Brahman*) and accept the authority of the Upsaniṣads. We have pointed out the *nairātmya* standpoint of Buddhism and its total opposition to the *ātman*, the permanent and universal, in any form. The barrier was always there. In the circumstances we can at best say that presumably there has been borrowing of technique and not of tenets.

(2) For the Mādhyamika the dialectic itself is all philosophy. After the refutation of all views or standpoints through *reductio ad absurdum* arguments (*prasaṅgāpādānam*) there is nothing else to know. There is no knowledge of anything as the underlying reality. *Prajñā* is the negation of all views (*śūnyatā* of all *dṛṣṭis*) and *prajñā* is the critical awareness itself without any object or content known.

In the Vedānta the dialectic is in the service of philosophical knowledge. The dialectic is used to refute difference or duality (*bheda, bhedabuddhi*) which hides the real and is *avidyā* (ignorance) *par excellence.* In this the Advaita follows the Upaniṣads in decrying difference. When difference is removed, the underlying reality of *Brahman* shines out. Although *Brahman* is not an object of knowledge, there is some sense in speaking of *knowing Brahman.* It is not knowledge through representation or discursive thought, but knowledge by *being* the thing known (*brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati*). When the superficial differences are rejected, what remains is the identical, universal Pure Being. We realize the absolute *Brahman* in negating the false ascriptions of it.

(3) Dialectic in the Vedānta starts with the analysis of an empirical illusion (for example the rope-snake), and this analysis is extended analogically to the world illusion. The Vedānta undertakes a very careful and elaborate analysis of empirical illusions and even criticizes the theories of illusions, with the purpose of elucidating the notions of *Real*, (*sat, satyam*) and the False (*mithyā, anṛta*) and to bring out the relationship between the two. It takes the Real as the unsublated (*abādhya*) as what maintains its nature unchanged throughout its entire existence. The False (appearance) on the other hand is what is sublated as it is subject to the negation of the former, that is "it was not, is not, and would not be". It is negated or removed, not by physical factors but by right knowledge, (*jñānanivartyatvam vā mithyātvam*). Its status is that it is neither Real nor utterly unreal (*sadasadvilakṣaṇatvam*). The utterly unreal (*asat, tuccha*) is defined as what never appeared as *real* anywhere. Thus the Real and the False are not contradictories, they are contraries. The False is at once different from the Real insofar as it is sublated in experience, and different from the utterly

unreal (like the sky-lotus, hare's horn, son of a barren woman, etc.) as it did not not appear as real, but did appear and was mistaken for the real. It is technically called *anirvacanīya*. The Vedānta further holds that whereas the False presupposes the Real as it is mistaken for it and without the ground or substrate there could not be appearances, the Real does not need to appear and can be without the appearance. The relation between the two is one-sided. This question will be considered later on. It is the contention of Vedānta that there can be no illusion without a real basis or substratum (*sadadhiṣṭhāna*).

What compels us to extend the logic of an empirical illusion to the world? Even granting the occurrences of empirical illusions and accepting the Vedānta analysis of such illusions, why should the world be taken as illusory? The Vedānta adduces some arguments why the world could be taken as illusory. The world is false because it has a determinate character or form, like the 'shell-silver'. A determinate character is an elaboration or thought-interpretation of what is directly or intuitively known and therefore is dependent on the latter. The thought elaboration may deviate from the intuitively given. A second argument is that the world is false because it is not self-evident (*jaḍa*); only the self-evident (*svayamprakāśa*) is real. The self-evident is what is not object and yet immediately and unconditionally aware of itself. A third argument is that the world is false, because it is limited (*paricchinna*) in space, in time and in regard to its nature. Only the infinite is real (*ananta, ānanda*). All worldly objects arise as limitations of the Infinite Being (*Brahman*). The Real is therefore defined as *sat*, (being) *cit*, (consciousness) and *ānanda*, (bliss), understood negatively of course as what is different from non-being, from the unconscious and from the painful.

Although the Vedānta gives arguments for the falsity of the world, its conviction is based, initially at least, on the scriptural texts and later on confirmed by reasoned thought and by direct experience.

As distinguished from the Vedānta position, the Mādhyamika does not start with the analysis of an empirical illusion and then extend it analogically to the world illusion. Although the Mādhyamika characterizes things as illusory and gives examples, as castles in the air (*gandharvanagara*) mirage (*marumarīci*) the stem of a banana tree, ball of foam (*phenapiṇḍa*) hair-ringlets in space (*keśoṇḍuka*) and of course the son of a barren woman, etc., he nowhere, to my knowledge, gives an analysis of any empirical illusion to point out what constitutes their illusoriness, as Vedānta does. Nor does he criticize other theories of illusion. He also does not draw any

distinction between the false (illusory) and the utterly unreal (*asat*) such as hare's horn or the son of a barren woman. The Vedānta does make out a clear and convincing case of distinction between the *mithyā* (false) and the *asat* (unreal).

The Mādhyamika starts with the world-illusion itself in all its directness and universality. The world-illusion is presented to the Mādhyamika as the total and persistent conflict of Reason – the interminable opposition of philosophical viewpoints as actually propounded by speculative philosophies. He is concerned with the Transcendental illusion. Their antinomical conflict on every issue of importance is an eyeopener. Criticism or *prajñā* emerges. The primordial opposition or contrast in the Mādhyamika is between *dṛṣṭi* and *prajñā*, between dogmatic or speculative philosophy and criticism, which self-consciously refuses to take positions. Nowhere does the Mādhyamika concern itself directly with issues like god, soul, matter, creation, etc., but only indirectly in his criticism of the philosophical views about these. For instance, in rejecting the different theories of causation the Mādhyamika has rejected causation as a constitutive feature of the real.

It must, however, be said that the Mādhyamika dialectic, being a criticism of philosophical standpoints, can get under way only when the different systems have already been formulated. It cannot be an original system. This may make the Mādhyamika philosophy appear adventitious, as it has to depend on the chance-emergence of different systems and their opposition. It has, however, been shown that the conflict is necessary and implicit in Reason itself. The Mādhyamika system may be later in time, but its emergence is logically necessary; the inner dynamism of philosophical consciousness leads to the transcendentalism of the Mādhyamika. Philosophical knowledge for him is not a body of doctrines, but their criticism and rejection.

II. ADVAYA AND ADVAITA

The Mādhyamika absolutism is an *advayavāda*. *Advaya* is knowledge free from the duality of the extremes (*antas* or *dṛṣtis*) of 'is' and 'is not', being, becoming, etc. It is knowledge freed of conceptual distinctions. *Advaita* is knowledge of a differenceless entity – *Brahman* (Pure Being). *Advaya* is purely an *epistemological* approach; the *advaita* is *ontological*. The sole concern of the Mādhyamika *advayavāda* is the purification of the faculty of knowing. The primordial error consists in the intellect being infected by the inveterate tendency to view Reality as identity or difference, permanent or momentary, one or many, etc. These views 'cover' or 'obscure' re-

ality, and the dialectic administers a cathartic corrective. With the purification of the intellect by *śūnyatā*, intuition (*prajñā*) emerges. The Real is known as it is, as *tathatā* or *bhūtakoṭi*. The emphasis is on the correct attitude of our knowing and not on the known.

From the ontological standpoint of the Advaita Vedānta, the emphasis is on the thing known. When that is universal and devoid of difference (duality) the knowing faculty too gets concentrated and lost in it (*brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati*); *Brahman* experience is non-dual. The primary aim of the Vedānta and the Vijñānavāda is to seek the truly real and suffuse the mind exclusively with it to the extent that the mind becomes one with the real. Dialectic is employed to demolish difference (*bheda*) plurality (*dvaita)* and particularity (*pariccheda*), thereby indirectly establishing the reality of Pure Being as changeless, universal and self-evident. The Vijñānavāda uses dialectic to disprove the reality of the object and plurality; it thereby indirectly establishes the sole reality of consciousness (*vijñāna*).

The Vedānta not only has an ontology but it also has a full-fledged theory of *avidyā* or *māyā* and gives an explanation of the world of *jīvas* (individuals) and matter. It has a cosmology, although this has an epistemic status only.

For the Mādhyamika the ontologization of categories of thought is the very worst sin one could commit; it is *dṛṣṭi* which it is the function of *śūnyatā* to remove. It is not therefore surprising that he has no doctrines about god, man, matter, creation, etc. Also he does not speculate about the nature of *avidyā*, to whom does it belong and what is its object, etc. The Advaita Vedānta schools, however, have interesting theories about these points. The Mādhyamika has a few things to say about *viparyāsa* (wrong belief or superimposition) and this will be considered later.

We may ask the question, Why is it that the Mādhyamika rejects every alternative standpoint and why does the Vedānta consider the world false (an appearance)?

The Mādhyamika has to make his rejection of views universal; he cannot refute some views, but has to include all philosophies actual (already formulated) and possible (anticipate future philosophies in a general way). He has thus to schematize and bring all philosophical views into his net of the four-cornered conspectus of negation (*catuṣkoṭi*). Universality and completeness is claimed for this much in the strain of Kant's critique or Hegel's dialectic. The question is not of the topical soundness of the schematism, but of the quality and daring, almost of the pretentious nature of the claim made by the Mādhyamika. Without this claim for universality, the

Mādhyamika criticism would not be a *dialectic of all philosophy*. Why are all views rejected? What is the principle on which it is done? Any fact of experience, when analysed, reveals the inner rift present in its constitution. It is not a thing in itself; it is what it is in relation to other entities, and these in turn depend on others. This process thus proceeds indefinitely and leads to a regress. Practically minded commonsense does not care to go deep. Philosophical systems, in their anxiety to uphold their own views, slur and gloss over the inherent flaw and instability of their contentions. For instance, in causation we must differentiate between the cause and the effect and at the same time identify them. The relation between the two cannot be conceived as identity, difference or both; nor can we give it up. Nāgārjuna says: "Neither of those things is established (as real) which cannot be conceived either as identical or different from each other."[2]

The principle is enunciated in almost every chapter of the Madhyamaka Kārikās. The substance-view thinks that it could have substance without attributes or modes; the modal view believes that it can dispense with substance altogether. There is, however, no attribute without substance nor is substance without attribute. They are not intelligible even together; for how can we then distinguish them? Nāgārjuna, in discussing the relation between a person and his emotions (*rāga* and *rakta*), says that they are not anything either together or separately; likewise, no entity is proved (to exist) as together or separately.[3] There is no self apart from the states (*upādāna*), nor are the latter without the self that gives unity to them; nor are they anything together.[4] The relation between fire and fuel (*agnīndhana*) is examined at length by Nāgārjuna to illustrate this predicament. Fire is not fuel, lest the consumer (agent or *kartā*) and the consumed (object-*karma*) should be identical; nor is fire different from fuel, for it cannot be had without the latter.[5] All entities, like the Self and its modes (*ātmopādānayoḥ kramaḥ*) as well as particular empirical things such as table and chair, are completely covered by this analysis.[6]

Again, it is pointed out that the agent is dependent on the act; and this in turn depends on the agent. All things are to be understood as on a par with the agent and the act.[7] If the definition (*lakṣaṇa*) were different from the definiendum (*lakṣya*), the latter would be bereft of any distinguishing mark; and if both were identical, then there would be the absence of both as such.[8] There is no whole apart from the parts and vice versa.[9] Things that derive their being and nature by mutual dependence are nothing in themselves: they are not real.[10]

Relation has to perform two mutually opposed functions; as connecting

the two terms, in making them relevant to each other, it has to identify them; but as connecting the two, it has to differentiate them. Otherwise expressed, relation cannot obtain between entities that are identical with or different from each other.[11]

These insuperable difficulties impel us to the conclusion that cause and effect, substance and attribute, whole and parts, subject and object, etc. are mutually dependent, relative; hence they are not things-in-themselves.[12]

What is relative is subjective, unreal. The categories are so many conceptual devices (*vikalpa, prapañca*) by which Reason tries to apprehend the Real that cannot be categorised and made relative (*buddher agocaras tattvam*). Reason (*buddhi*) is therefore condemned as falsifying the real (*saṁvṛti*). No phenomenon, no object of knowledge (*bhāva* or *abhāva*), escapes this universal relativity.[13]

Relativity or mutual dependence is a mark of the unreal. A Hegel would have welcomed this inherent dependence of things as the dialectical necessity of Reason working through the opposites, differentiating and at once unifying them. For him that is the mark of the Real. And this, because he does not go beyond Reason; in fact, for Hegel Reason and Real are identical. For the Mādhyamika, reciprocity, dependence, is the lack of inner essence. *Tattva*, or the Real, is something in itself, self-evident and self-existent.[14] Reason, which understands things through distinction and relation is a principle of falsity, as it distorts and thereby hides the Real.[15] Only the Absolute as the unconditioned is real, and for that very reason it cannot be conceived as existence (*bhāva*) or non-existence (*abhāva*) or both or neither together.

For the Mādhyamika everything is self-inconsistent and nothing can be salvaged out of it. For the Vedānta falsity is a mistake (imposition of one thing on another), and there could not be any mistake without a core of truth or reality. The rope is mistaken for a 'snake'; *Brahman* is mistaken for the world. The 'snake' is false because the rope alone is real. There cannot be a mere mistake; it is always grounded on something real.

Ultimately, the entire world of appearance rests on the ground of *Brahman*. There is thus no context of illusion which cannot yield reality as its substratum. We have only to remove the cover of appearance to find behind it the real.

III. THE TWO TRUTHS: SAMVRTI AND PARAMĀRTHA

All Mādhyamika treatises[16] take the two truths – *paramārthasatya* and

saṁvṛtisatya – as vital to the system; some even begin their philosophical disquisitions with the distinction. According to Nāgārjuna, "Those that are unaware of the distinction between these two truths are incapable of grasping the deep significance of the teaching of Buddha."[17] The doctrine is already well-developed in the Aṣṭasāhasrikā and other Prajñāpāramitā texts besides Saddharma Puṇḍarīka, Samādhirāja and similar Mahāyana Sūtras.

Paramārthasatya, or Absolute Truth, is the knowledge of the real as it is without any distortion (*akṛtrimam vasturūpam*).[18] Categories of thought and points of view distort the real. They unconsciously coerce the mind to view things in a cramped, biassed way; and are thus inherently incapable of giving us the Truth. The *paramārtha* is the utter absence of the function of Reason (*buddhi*) which is therefore equated with *saṁvṛti*. The Absolute truth is beyond the scope of discursive thought, language and empirical activity; and conversely, the object of these is *saṁvṛtisatya*[19] It is said: "The paramārtha is in fact the unutterable (*anabhilāpya*), the unthinkable, unteachable etc."[20]

Devoid of empirical determinations, it is the object of the innermost experience of the wise.[21] It is so intimate and integral that we cannot be self-conscious of it.

Saṁvṛtisatya is Truth so called; truth as conventionally believed in common parlance. Candrakīrti gives three definitions of *saṁvṛti*. As the etymology shows, *saṁvṛti* is that which covers up entirely the real nature of things and makes them appear otherwise. In this sense it is identical with *avidyā* – the categorising function of the mind – Reason. *Tattva* is the unconditioned (*nirvikalpa* and *niṣprapañca*). It may also mean the mutual dependence of things – their relativity. In this sense it is equated with phenomena, and is in direct contrast with the absolute which is by itself, unrelated. The third definition of *saṁvṛti* is that which is of conventional nature (*saṁketa*), depending as it does on what is usually accepted by the common folk (*lokavyavahāra*).[22] It is the truth that does not do any violence to what obtains in our everyday world, being in close conformity with linguistic conventions and ideas. It is the object of the ignorant and the immature. *Paramārthasatya* is unsignified by language and belongs to the realm of the unutterable, and is experienced by the wise in a very intimate way.[23]

In calling it '*lokasaṁvṛti*', it is implied that there is some appearance which is '*aloka*' – non-empirical, i.e. false for the empirical consciousness even. Cases of optical and other illusions, distorted perceptions caused by diseased and defective sense-organs, experiences in abnormal states of the

mind and dream-objects are examples of the *'aloka'* or *mithyā saṁvṛti.*[24] This corresponds to the *prātibhāsika* of the Vedānta.

IV. AVIDYĀ

The first definition of *saṁvṛti* is that it covers entirely the Real, and in this sense it is *avidyā* or *viparyāsa*. For the Mādhyamika not only difference but identity too is *avidyā*; the real is neither one nor many, neither permanent nor momentary; neither subject (*vijñāna*) nor object. These are relative to each other and are equally unreal. The Real is purely indeterminate, and all attempts to identify it with Being, Becoming, Consciousness, etc. are *vikalpa*, subjective devices. Nāgārjuna says: "If the apprehension of the impermanent as permanent is illusion, why is the apprehension of the indeterminate as impermanent not illusion as well."[25]

In the Abhidharma, Vedānta and Vijñānavāda systems particular concepts or ways of viewing the real are *avidyā*. For the Mādhyamika, *avidyā* is much wider and more general in scope; conceptualization as such (not merely particular concepts), any view without exception, is *avidyā*. Reason or intellect (*buddhi*) as the faculty of conceptual construction is *avidyā* (*buddhiḥ saṁvṛtir ity ucyate*).

Avidyā for the Mādhyamika is itself unreal, it is *māyā*. If it were real, its products too would be real and there could be no question of negating, or even changing the world process. Nāgārjuna puts the matter dialectically thus: "If the passions belonged to one as an integrally real part of one's nature, how could they be abandoned; the real cannot be rejected by anyone. If the passions did not belong to anyone, how could they be abandoned; for, who could abandon the unreal, the non-existent? It is concluded that *kleśās*, *karma* and their result are of the stuff of fairy castles, mirages and dreams."[26]

The Vedānta offers full explanation of *avidyā*, evidence for its presence and the way it functions. *Avidyā* is the principle of creativity (the *śakti* of *Brahman*) by which the non-dual eternal Being, becomes, 'appears' as many and is differentiated. It is a beginningless quasi-positive entity, though not eternal, and is of the nature of Name and Form, (*avyaktanāmarūpa*). It functions in an *a priori* way. The empirical world is a joint product of *Brahman* and *avidyā*. It belongs to *Brahman*, as only a conscious being capable of knowledge can be ignorant. And that can be only undifferentiated universal Pure Being (*nirvibhāga citi*); for particular beings (*jīvas*) presuppose difference which is the function of *avidyā*.

In the last analysis, *avidyā* or *māyā* represents the freedom of *Brahman*, to appear as the world or not to appear, or to appear in any other form. It is the principle by which the Transcendence of *Brahman* is safeguarded and yet there is the world appearance as from *Brahman. Māyā* has an epistemic status only. The relation between *Brahman* and *māyā* is one-sided identity: *māyā* depends on *Brahman*, but *Brahman* can be free of *māyā*.

As in the case of the Absolute, the doctrine of two truths also is liable to misinterpretation. There are not two different spheres or sets of objects to which these apply. There would then be no point in calling one *saṁvṛti* and the other *paramārtha*; the two might be different, but one would not be less real than the other. The difference is in our manner of looking at things. All things put on two forms owing to the manner of our apprehension: one is the *tattva* which is the object of right knowledge and the other is the object of false knowledge. In fact, there is only one Truth – the *paramārthasatya*, as there is only one real – the Absolute. The other – *saṁvṛtisatya*, is truth so-called in common parlance, it is totally false from the absolute standpoint.

It might be asked, if *saṁvṛti* is ultimately to be rejected and not retained in the *paramārtha*, why consider it at all? We should concern ourselves with the *paramārtha* alone. But can we do so without taking the help of the *saṁvṛti* (*vyavahārika*)? If we had been already rooted in the Absolute (*paramārtha*), there should not be any occasion or use for *saṁvṛti*. The *paramārtha*, however, can be understood and realized only negatively, *only as we remove the saṁvṛti*, the forms which thought has already, unconsciously and beginninglessly, ascribed to the real. The Real is to be *un*covered, *dis*covered and realized as the reality of appearances (*dharmāṇāṁ dharmatā*). In the order of our discovery, the removal of *saṁvṛti* must precede our knowledge of the *paramārtha*. The *paramārtha* is the end or goal that we seek to attain, and *saṁvṛti* is the means; it is the ladder or the jumping board which enables us to reach that objective. It is therefore stated that *saṁvṛti* is the means (*upāyabhūta*) and *paramārtha* is the end (*upeyabhūta*). Basing ourselves on *vyavahāra* do we advance to the *paramārtha*.

The Four Holy Truths have to be understood as included in these two: *nirodhasatya* as *nirvāṇa* is *paramārtha* and the other three including the *mārga*, are within *saṁvṛti*. Even the spiritual discipline (*mārga*) undertaken for attaining *nirvāṇa*, exalted and purifying as it is, is within *saṁvṛti*. So too, the four fruits of the discipline are within *saṁvṛti*. The Prajñāpāramitā goes so far as to say that even Buddhahood is illusory like a dream or

māyā; if there were anything higher than that even, it has to be pronounced to be within *saṁvṛti*. The reason is that the scope of *saṁvṛti* is coterminus with the range of concepts and words, with any kind of distinction and duality.

V. CONCEPTION OF RELATION IN THE MĀDHYAMIKA AND VEDĀNTA

For the Mādhyamika, both the terms of a relational complex are false; as mutually dependent, they lack an essential nature of their own. The relativity of things is their unreality. The cause and the effect are neither identical with nor different from each other, nor both, nor neither. There is no substance without attributes, nor attributes without substance; the self (*ātman*) is not one with its states; nor is it anything apart from them. Like Bradley, who lays down that qualities are nothing within or without relation and so too relation, the Mādhyamika enunciates his dictum that both those things are unreal which cannot be conceived as either identical with or different from each other.

The Vedantist will not reject both the terms as relative; he accepts one as the reality or the basis of the other. For the Mādhyamika, the substance and the attributes are equally unreal, as neither of them can be had apart from the other. The Vedantist would say that the attributes are mere ascriptions of substance, the particulars are negations of the universal and are, therefore, unreal by their very nature (*svarūpato mithyā*); but the substance or the universal is inherently real, only its seeming relationship with the attributes or particulars is false (*saṁsargato mithyā*); it has a transcendent nature without the relation.

The general formula applicable to the Vedānta is: the terms sustaining a relation are not of the same order, one is *higher*, and the other *lower*; the two terms are neither mutually dependent nor mutually independent; relation is neither 'internal' nor 'external'. If mutually dependent, we cannot distinguish between the two terms, as they so necessarily imply each other that one cannot exist without the other any time. We cannot even say that there are two terms, as the basis of distinction is lacking. If mutually independent, there is no basis of connection; each term is a self, a self-contained universe as it were. To escape this dilemma, we have to conceive one term as basic and capable of existing apart from its relation to the other and the other incapable of so doing and therefore dependent. One term, the higher, is not exhausted in the relationship; it has a transcendent or non-implicatory existence which is its intrinsic nature. The other term,

however, is entirely exhausted within the relation and has no non-relative existence (*prātibhāsika, pratibhāsa-mātra-śarīratvam*).

VI. VIEWS ON LANGUAGE

I may very briefly indicate the function of language in the two systems. For the Mādhyamika language is a conventional set of symbols which has no reference outside this convention to any referent, to fact or reality. The meaning of a term or concept is another term or concept. That is, we never get out of the convention. This is *saṃvṛti* as *lokavyavahāra*, as conformity with linguistic conventions and ideas. Speech has no revelatory function.

The Vedānta on the other hand holds that though *literally* we cannot speak of *Brahman* as meant by the word, it can still *indicate* the presence of *Brahman* in a metaphorical or symbolical way (*lakṣyārtha*). In fact, it is through the Scriptural Word (*vāk*), that we initially derive our knowledge of *Brahman*. *Brahman* is known only through the Upaniṣads.[27] In the last analysis, *vāk* (speech) and *Brahman* may even be identical.

VII. ŚŪNYATĀ AS FREEDOM

It is the contention of the Mādhyamika that the final release is possible only through *śūnyatā* – by the giving up of all views, standpoints and predicaments. The root cause of *duḥkha*, in this system, is the indulging in views (*dṛṣṭis*) or imagination (*kalpanā, vikalpa*). *Kalpanā* is *avidyā par exellence*. The real is the indeterminate (*śūnya*); investing it with a character, determining it as 'this' or 'not this' is to make the Real one-sided, partial and unreal.

Nāgārjuna analyses the nature of bondage and freedom, thus; "Of constructive imagination are born attachment, aversion and infatuation, depending (respectively) on our good, evil and stupid attitudes. Entities which depend on these are not anything by themselves. The *kleśas* are unreal."[28] "Freedom (*mokṣa*) is the cessation of *karma* and *kleśa* (acts and passions); these arise from *vikalpa* (imaginative construction); this ceases with the knowledge of their falsity (*śūnyatā*)."[29] *Śūnyatā* is the antidote for all *kleśas*. When the real is not misapprehended as an *ens* or as a non-*ens* there is cessation of *kalpanā* and the cessation of *kalpanā* is *nirvāṇa*. Thus the abandonment of all views and standpoints is the means to freedom; it is a disburdenment and a great relief. It is Freedom itself. It is for

this soteriological purpose that *śūnyatā* is taught and practised. It is a species of spiritual regeneration. But we should not take the cure of the disease as one more reality. Both the disease (*saṁsāra*) and its cure (*śūnyatā*) are equally within phenomena. We are therefore warned not to consider *śūnyatā* to be another *dṛṣṭi*.

For the Vedānta, *'Tat tvam asi'* (That thou art), *'aham Brahma asmi'* (I am Brahman), is the saving knowledge which engenders freedom through knowledge of identity between the Self (*ātman*) and *Brahman* (Universal Being). But this saving knowledge is itself phenomenal.

In both the Mādhyamika and the Vedānta freedom is the abandoning of the egoistic standpoint and attainment of the universal. The attainment is conceived somewhat more positively as Brahmahood, while the Mādhyamika will not allow us to characterize it in any manner in keeping with his *śūnyatā*.

VIII. CONCLUSION

I have interpreted *śūnyatā* and the doctrine of Two Truths as a kind of Absolutism, not Nihilism. Nāgārjuna's 'no views about reality' should not be taken as advocating 'a no-reality view'. I find myself, therefore, unable to accept Dr. Streng's interpretation that Nāgārjuna does not accept, even by implication, any ultimate Reality and that there is no Absolute in his system. All absolutism need not be of the Vedantic type, and I have drawn, in the course of this paper, the difference between the Vedānta and the Mādhyamika philosophies. I have pointed out that the Mādhyamika is epistemological in his procedure while the Vedānta is ontological. The former is an *advayavāda* (no two views), while the latter is an *advaita* (no two things). The Mādhyamika does not allow us to characterize and clothe the real in empirical terms and concepts (*prapañca, vikalpa*); even *nirvāṇa* or the *tathāgata* should not be theorized about. In the final resort *śūnyatā* by which all things are pronounced unreal, is itself not an end, an entity, but only a means, a remedy to cure a malady. All this is acceptable. But does this 'no view about reality' amount to a 'no-reality view'? That would be a species of nihilism. Both Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti very vigorously protest against construing *śūnyatā* as "*abhāvārtha*"[30] (nihilism). *Tattva* (The Real) is accepted and is even defined "as transcendent to thought", as non-relative, non-determinate, quiescent, non-discursive, non-dual.[31] True, the Absolute does not possess any attribute of its own, but its presence can be indicated even by an ascribed mark (*samāropāt*). It is asked: "How can the

anakṣara (the Inexpressible) be understood and taught (declared)?" The Absolute is known as the reality of the appearances, what they falsely stand for.[32]

What happens to the distinction between the Two Truths, the *paramārtha* and *saṁvṛti*? In Dr. Streng's view the *paramārtha* would itself be a species of the conventional and having done its business of rejecting the conventional truths it will itself collapse into nothing. For him, the distinction between the two is only provisional and tactical. There cannot be anything outside the conventional. In reality there is no distinction, and this basic contention of the Mādhyamika has to be given up. In pronouncing everything as *śūnya* does not Nāgārjuna rely on an absolute criterion of the Real as *aparapratyaya* (non-dependent) and *prapañcopaśamam* and *śivam* (free from speech elaboration and benign)? "All things are relative" (*pratītyasamutpannam*). Is this a statement which is itself relative or is it a perception of Truth (*prajñā*)? If the former, its relativity cannot rest on itself nor on the things of which it is a statement. If it were to rest on some other higher statement, this will only lead to a regress *ad infinitum*. To avoid all this, it is more consistent to take it as a *perception*, (not a logical statement) of truth.

Dr. Streng accepts that *śūnyatā* serves a soteriological purpose and is religiously motivated. In that sense it differs from modern positivism or linguistic philosophy. But how can this purpose be secured if nothing is left over as Real, after the rejection of all things as relative? It is as if a man suffering from headache were told to cut off his head. Of course, he would be 'cured', for he will have nothing to complain about. In our view, both the headache and its cure and the antidote will be of the same phenomenal order; but the head would remain.

The solution offered by Nāgārjuna to the problem of suffering is really to say that there is no problem, or the problem is of our own making. Even this has to be realized through a spiritual discipline culminating in this conviction. The Vedānta also says the same thing. We are all *Brahman*, only we do not know that we are so. "The individual illusorily thinks he is not free and wants to be free. To his consciousness, accordingly, there is the necessity of a *sādhanā* or discipline to attain freedom. This discipline must be such as will lead him to realize that his bondage is an illusion and that he is eternally free."[33]

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NOTES

[1] *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism,* Geo. Allen and Unwin, 1955, pp. 321-2.

[2] MK. II, 21.
ekībhāvena vā siddhir nānābhāvena vā yayoḥ
na vidyate tayoḥ siddiḥ kathaṁ nu khalu vidyate
MK. XXI, 6.
sahānyonyena vā siddhir vinānyonyena vā yayoḥ
na vidyate tayoḥ siddhiḥ kathaṁ nu khalu vidyate

[3] MK. VI, 10.
evaṁ raktena rāgasya siddhir na saha nāsaha
rāgavat sarvadharmāṇāṁ siddhir na saha nāsaha

[4] MK. X, 16.
ātmanaś ca satattvaṁ ye bhāvānāṁ ca pṛthak pṛthak
nirdiśanti na tān manye śāsanasyārthakovidān

[5] MK. X, 1.
yad indhanaṁ sa ced agnir ekatvaṁ kartṛkarmaṇoḥ
anyaś ced indhanād agnir indhanād apy ṛte bhavet

[6] MK. X, 15.
agnīndhanābhyāṁ vyākhyāta ātmopādānayoḥ kramaḥ
sarvo niravaśeṣeṇa sārdhaṁ ghaṭapaṭādibhiḥ

[7] MK. VIII, 12, 13.

[8] Prasannapadā 64.5, 6.
lakṣyāl lakṣaṇam anyac cet syāt tad lakṣyam alakṣaṇaṁ
tayor abhāvo 'nanyatve viṣpaṣṭaṁ kathitaṁ tvayā

[9] MK. IV, 1.
rūpakāraṇanirmuktaṁ na rūpam upalabhyate
rūpeṇāpi na nirmuktaṁ dṛśyate rūpakāraṇaṁ

[10] Prasannapadā, p. 200.
parasparāpekṣā siddhir na svābhāvikīti

[11] MK. XIV, 8.
na tena tasya saṁsargo, nānyenānyasya yujyate
Cf. Bradley: "Relation presupposes quality, and quality relation. Each can be something neither together with, nor apart from, the other; and the vicious circle in which they turn is not the truth about Reality." *Appearance and Reality,* p. 21.

[12] MK. XVIII, 10.
pratītya yad yad bhavati na hi tāvat tad eva tat
MK. VII, 16.
pratītya yad yad bhavati tat tac chāntam svabhāvataḥ
Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā (BCAP) p. 352. pratītyasamutpannaṁ vasturūpaṁ saṁvṛtir ucyate.
Thus, pratītyasamutpāda is equated with śūnyatā. See MK. XXIV, 18.

[13] MK. XXIV, 19.
apratītya samutpanno dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate
yasmāt tasmād aśūnyo hi dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate

[14] MK. XVIII, 9.
aparapratyayaṁ śāntaṁ prapañcair aprapañcitam

nirvikalpam anānārtham etat tattvasya lakṣaṇam.

[15] Bradley comes to the same conclusion: "The conclusion to which I am brought is that a relational way of thought – any one that moves by the machinery of terms and relations – must give appearance, and not truth." *Appearance and Reality,* p. 28.

[16] Some chief references where this doctrine is discussed: MK. XXIV; Madhyamakāvatāra by Candrakirtī (MA) VI, 23 ff; Bodhicaryāvatāra by Śāntideva, IX, i ff; BCAP pp. 352 ff.

[17] MK. XXIV, 9.

ye ' nayor na vijānanti vibhāgaṁ satyayor dvayoḥ
te tattvaṁ na vijānanti gambhīraṁ buddhaśāsane

[18] BCAP. p. 354.

paramaḥ uttamo 'rthaḥ, paramārthaḥ akṛtrimaṁ vasturūpaṁ, sarvadharmāṇāṁ niḥsvabhāvatā

[19] From Satyadvayāvatāra as quoted in BCAP p. 366; see also Prasannapadā, pp. 374-5.

yadi hi paramārthataḥ paramārthasatyaṁ kāyavāṅmanasāṁ viṣayatām upagacchet, na tat paramārthasatyam iti saṅkhyāṁ gacchet. saṁvṛtisatyam eva tad bhavet. api tu, devaputra, paramārthasatyaṁ sarvavyavahārasamatikrāntaṁ nirviśeṣam asamutpannam aniruddham, abhidheyābhidhānajñeyajñānavigatam, etc.

[20] From Pitāputra Samāgama as quoted in Śiksāsamuccaya by Śāntideva (ed. by Bendell) (Bib. Buddhica I), p. 256; BCAP. p. 367.

yaḥ punaḥ paramārthaḥ so 'nabhilāpyaḥ, anājñeyaḥ, aparijñeyaḥ, avijñeyaḥ, adeśitaḥ, aprakāśitaḥ etc.

[21] BCAP, p. 367.

tad etad āryānām eva svasamviditasvabhāvatayā pratyātmavedyam, atas tad evātra pramāṇam

Prasannapadā, p. 493. 10. 11

kutas tatra paramārthe vācāṁ pravṛttiḥ kuto vā jñānasya. sa hi paramārtho 'parapratyayaḥ śāntaḥ pratyātmavedya āryāṇāṁ sarvaprapañcātītaḥ

[22] Prasannapadā p. 492. 10-12.

samantād varaṇam saṁvṛtiḥ. ajñānaṁ hi samantāt sarvapadārthatattvāvacchādanāt saṁvṛtir ity ucyate; parasparasaṁbhavanaṁ vā saṁvṛtir anyonyasamāśrayenety arthaḥ; atha vā saṁvṛtiḥ saṁketo lokavyavahāra ity arthaḥ. sa cābhidhānābhidheyjñānajñeyādilakṣaṇaḥ

It is in the first sense of *saṁvṛti* as *avidyā* that Śāntideva identifies *saṁvṛti* with *buddhi.* BCA. IX, 2; this is the same as *dṛṣṭi.* See also MA VII. 28. mohaḥ svabhāvāvaranād dhi saṁvṛtiḥ, satyam tayākhyāti yad eva kṛtrimam. avidyā hi padārthasatsvarūpāropikā svabhāvadarśanāvaraṇātmikā saṁvṛtiḥ. MA. p. 23.

[23] BCAP, p. 360.

abhūtārthadarśināṁ pṛthagjanānāṁ mṛṣadarśanaviṣayatayā samādarśitātmasattākam

MA. VI, 23

samyagdṛśāṁ yo viṣayaḥ sa tattvam mṛṣādṛśāṁ saṁvṛtiṣatyaṁ uktam

[24] MA. VI, 24, 25, 26.

vinopaghātena yad indriyāṇāṁ ṣaṇṇām api grāhyam avaiti lokaḥ satyaṁ tal lokata eva śeṣaṁ vikalpitaṁ lokata eva mithyā

[25] MK. XII, 14.
[26] MK. XXIII, 24, 25.
[27] Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya on Brahma Sūtras I, i, 3.
taṁ tu aupaniṣadaṁ puruṣaṁ pṛcchāmi
[28] MK. XXII, 1, 2.
[29] MK. XVIII, 5.
[30] MK. XXIV
[31] MK. XVIII, 9.
[32] Prasannapadā p. 264, 6, 7 and BCAP, p. 365.
anakṣarasya dharmasya śrutiḥ kā deśanā ca kā śrūyate deśyate cāpi samāropād anakṣaraḥ
[33] K.C. Bhattacharyya, *Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 118, Progressive Publishers, Calcutta.

FREDERICK J. STRENG

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PRATĪTYASAMUTPĀDA FOR UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SAṀVṚTI AND PARAMĀRTHASATYA IN NĀGĀRJUNA

The teaching by the Buddhas of the *dharma* has recourse to two truths:
The world-ensconced truth and the truth which is the highest sense.
Those who do not know the distribution of the two kinds of truth
Do not know the profound 'point' in the teaching of the Buddha.
The highest sense is not taught apart from the conventional.
And without having understood the highest sense one cannot understand *nirvāṇa.*
He who perceives dependent co-origination
Also understands sorrow, origination, and destruction as well as the path.[1]

The relationship between *saṁvṛti* and *paramārtha* in Mādhyamika thought has often been conceived as an epistemological dualism: *saṁvṛti* is regarded as phenomenal illusion, and *paramārtha* is an undivided mystical union with the One eternal absolute.[2] For instance, Edward Conze, in the section on Mādhyamika in *Buddhist Thought in India*, speaks of a substratum at the base of all phenomenal reality which is the Mādhyamika "vision of the One."[3] Again, he says that the spiritual intention of the term "emptiness" is "to reveal the Infinite by removing that which obscures it."[4] This way of understanding the relationship between the phenomenal world and the highest awareness of truth (reality) may be suggested in the expressions of some of Nāgārjuna's followers, especially the Prāsaṅgika school; but I cannot find this kind of differentiation in the *Mūlamadyamakakārikās* or *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, and it may be helpful for the discussion of Mādhyamika philosophy to analyze the notion of 'the two satyas' in relation to *pratītyasamutpāda* as found in these texts.

While I would not want to suggest that the 'true' position of any school of philosophy is found in the earliest expression, a focus on these texts may reveal that at least part – the earliest expression – of the Mādhyamika school had different epistemological and ontological presuppositions than a dualism of conditioned illusion and Unconditioned Reality. To investigate this problem I want to proceed in three steps: (1) analyze the assumption in these texts that the nature of reality (including existence) is 'dependent co-origination' or 'emptiness'; (2) analyze Nāgārjuna's use of conventional logical procedure and his

M. Sprung (ed.), Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta. 27-39.

appeal to empirical evidence for guidance in discovering the nature of reality; and (3) indicate how an understanding of reality as 'empty' prohibits a rejection of conventional (i.e. conditioned) means for attaining final release.

SAṀVṚTI AND PARAMĀRTHASATYA ARE EXPRESSIONS OF PRATĪTYASAMUTPĀDA (ŚŪNYATĀ)

The 'originating dependently' we call 'emptiness'.
This apprehension, i.e., taking into account (all other things),
is [the understanding of] the middle way.
Since there is no *dharma* whatever originating independently,
No *dharma* whatever exists which is not empty.
If all existence is not empty, there is neither origination nor destruction.
You must wrongly conclude then that the four holy truths do not exist.

You deny all mundane and customary activities
When you deny emptiness (in the sense of) dependent co-origination.[5]

When emptiness 'works', then everything in existence 'works'
If emptiness does *not* 'work', then all existence does *not* 'work'.

All things prevail for him for whom emptiness prevails:
Nothing whatever prevails for him for whom emptiness prevails.[6]

In these passages Nāgārjuna exposes the basic perspective of the Middle Way: all existing things are empty of a self-established nature (*svabhāva*) and this is a situation which must obtain for any existing thing to come into being. Existing things do not exist by virtue of their own being, nor can the arising-process be segmented into self-substantiated elements which then somehow cause changes in each other. This perspective, however, does not deny the arising of mundane existence; it simply claims that this 'coming into existence' cannot be accounted for by self-substantiated factors, causes, conditions, times, ignorance, desire – though these 'things' are experienced, as are mirages and fairy castles.

In this perspective the fundamental character of *all dharmas* and all 'things' (*bhāva*) is that they are dependently co-originated (empty). However, here I am using the term 'fundamental character' to avoid the implication that there is some unconditioned quality, some 'essential nature' which is defined by the term 'empty'; rather, it reflects the perspective that there are only empty, conditioned actual things in our phenomenal

experience. This phenomenal experience (*saṁskṛta*), however, is conducive to misconceiving the truth about phenomenal (conditioned) existence. *Saṁskṛta* is a term that has various related meaning in the *Kārikās*, somewhat like the term 'appeared' in English. 'Appear' can have a positive connotation of 'self-evident reality', as in the statement: "He *appeared* in the doorway, though we thought he was lost." Also it has a negative connotation of illusion, as when we say: "He *appeared* to be honest, though he was a thief." Likewise, an ambiguity is indicated about the reality of the situation when we hear: "You appear as if you do not want to go." Similarly, *saṁskṛta* arises and disappears through dependent co-origination (which is the only way anything comes into existence and dissipates), while at the same time conditioned existence is experienced as limited, and full of suffering.

The problem is: how can dependent co-origination account for the experience of *saṁsāra* without necessarily perpetuating *saṁsāra* in such a way that a qualitatively different reality is required to effect a release from it? One answer might be that dependent co-origination is the 'lower expression' of the reality of *śūnyatā*, whose true or higher expression is an avoidance of any conditioned existence and in this sense is without dependent co-origination. This kind of interpretation is typical of the best known English-language materials available today. It is also related to a common recognition that Nāgārjuna's effort was a technique for release from the suffering involved in phenomenal existence; and thus his expression that 'all things are empty' is seen basically as a technique for mystic awareness of the unconditioned One, a *via negativa.*

While I heartily concur that Nāgārjuna's effort is best understood in terms of a religious concern for release from suffering, I would suggest that if the release is interpreted as a movement from conditioned existence (*saṁskṛta*) to a qualitatively different unconditioned reality (*asaṁskṛta*) it is done with a failure to take seriously Nāgārjuna's perspective that 'dependent-co-origination' is the meaning of 'emptiness'. Emptiness (*śūnyatā*) refers to two dimensions of the Buddhist concern: (1) it is the situation in which conditioned existence arises and dissipates, and thus it applies to practical everyday experience; and (2) it is the situation of freedom from suffering, the highest awareness. It is important that we distinguish these two without appealing to an eternal self-established reality (*svabhāva*) as something 'more real' than dependent co-origination. For Nāgārjuna 'dependent co-origination' is the basic term through which one can understand both the arising and cessation of pain; it is a situation

that is in itself neutral, allowing for both the production of illusion (fantasy, phantoms) and its cessation. If this is the case, we must analyze how it is that phenomenal existence (including the world-ensconced truth, *saṁvṛti*) can either be an illusory pain-producing reality, or be a means for release from attachment to this illusory reality.

SAṀVṚTI CAN BE USED TO REALIZE PRATĪTYASAMUTPADA (I.E. ŚŪNYATĀ)

If we recognize that the nature of reality is 'dependent co-origination', then the conditioned awareness (*saṁvṛti*)[7] that we commonly know is already an expression of this reality. However, Nāgārjuna does not hold all forms of conditioned awareness to be equally valid expressions of reality. As a matter of fact, much perception and conceptual formulation is illusory because it is formed by the assumption of self-substantiated reality (which experience is as binding for man as the reality of dependent co-origination is liberating). Actually, many conditions that obtain for the appearance of truth also obtain for the appearance of error. The formation of conditioned existence does not automatically carry with it a unique quality (*svalakṣaṇa*) of evil by comparison to an unconditioned reality. This is made clear in the *Kārikās*:

> Because the existence of production, duration, and cessation is not proved, there is no *saṁskṛta*:
> And if *saṁskṛta* is not proved, how can *asaṁskṛta* be proved? As a magic trick, a dream, or a fairy castle,
> Just so should we consider origination, duration, and cessation.[8]

Rather, we see that a problem occurs when we act *inappropriately* to the empty (non-*svabhāva*) set of conditions that allow *saṁskṛta* to arise. This inappropriateness is our acting as if we could discern a self-existent reality either in the conditioned 'thing' or in some identifiable 'element' of our experience (like 'origination', 'duration', or 'cessation'). By seizing on one aspect and making decisions about oneself on the assumption that it is an ultimate (self-existent) reality, human beings mistake their judgments for the nature of existence. Contrariwise, the insight that leads to the cessation of these inappropriate acts is an awareness that the conditions and relations by which we define our experience are empty. Thus, ignorance and insight both require the situation of dependent co-origination, but ignorance is the superimposition of a partial truth (the crystallizing of the non-

eternal quality of life into an eternal entity) on to the dynamic character of reality.

Perhaps the view of *saṁvṛti* in Nāgārjuna's thought can be more specifically analyzed by looking at some of the passages which deal directly with the psychological production and dissolution of phenomenal existence. In the *Kārikās'* discussion of misconceptions (*viparyāsa*) we read:

It is said that desire (*rāga*), hate, and delusion are derived from
mental fabrication (*saṁkalpa*),
Because they come into existence presupposing misconceptions as
to what is salutary and unsalutary. Those things which come into existence
presupposing misconceptions
as to what is salutary and unsalutary
Do not exist by their own nature (*svabhāva*); therefore the impurities
(*kleśa*) do not exist in reality.
Form, sound, taste, touch, smell and the *dharmas* are
Merely the form of a fairy castle, like a mirage, a dream
That by which a notion is formed, the notion, those who have notions,
and that which is grasped (in the notion):
All have ceased; therefore, the notion does not exist (as *svabhāva*).

From the cessation of misconception ignorance ceases;
When ignorance has ceased, *saṁskāras* and everything else cease.
The misconceptions as to what is salutary and non-salutary do not
exist as self-existent entities (*svabhāvatas*)
Depending on which misconceptions as to what is salutary and
non-salutary are then impurities? [9]

Here we see several terms used which give us some indication of Nāgārjuna's view of the relation of thinking to misconception. Mental fabrication (*saṁkalpa*) is a condition for various evils when it is informed by misconceptions. However, misconception can cease, since it is not a self-existent entity. Likewise, since there are no self-existent entities in the production of either a person or notions (*graha*), these productions cease to exist as self-existent entities. Thus, all *saṁkalpa* and *graha* that depend on assumption of *svabhāva* cease when the critique of *pratītyasamutpāda* is applied.

Similarly, the notion of *prapañca* is used to indicate an illusion that comes to an end:

The cessation of accepting everything (as real) is a blessed
cessation of phenomenal extension (*prapañca*);
No *dharma* has been taught by the Buddha of anything.

On account of the destruction of the *kleśas* of action there is release;
for *kleśas* of action exist for him who constructs them.
These *kleśas* result from phenomenal extension (*prapañca*); but this
phenomenal extension comes to a stop by emptiness.[10]

Another important term for illusory mental effort is *dṛṣṭi* – a view, or doctrine that claims absolute validity on the grounds that it asserts a self-existent truth. In *Kārikās* XXVII 29-30 the cessation of *dṛṣṭi* is seen to come about when one has insight into emptiness:

Because of the emptiness of all existing things,
How will the view about 'eternity', etc. come into existence,
about what, of whom, and of what kind?
To him, possessing compassion, who taught the real *dharma*
For the destruction of all views – to him, Gautama, I humbly offer
reverence.[11]

The illusory character of *graha*, *dṛṣṭi*, and *prapañca* is that they superimpose the character of *svabhāva* on the 'dependently co-originating character' of reality.

In 'emptiness' the conceptual and perceptual distinctions that assume absolute (*svabhāva*) characteristics are dissipated. At the same time, the nature of reality ('emptiness') cannot be reduced to propositions. This is made clear in the following stanzas:

When the domain of thought has been dissipated, 'that which can be
stated' is dissipated.
Those things which are unoriginated and not terminated, like
nirvāṇa, constitute the Truth (*dharmatā*).
Emptiness is proclaimed by the victorious one as the refutation of
all viewpoints;
But those who hold 'emptiness' as a viewpoint – (the true
perceivers) have called those 'incurable' (*asādhya*).
One may not say 'empty' (in reference to the *tathāgata*); nor that he
is 'non-empty'; not both nor neither;
('Empty') is said for the purpose of conveying knowledge.[12]

According to these stanzas the articulation of 'emptiness' cannot be regarded as grasping reality with a mental form (word, idea); nvertheless, there is a valid purpose of using verbal expression. The purpose is twofold; (1) to refute all viewpoints (i.e. dogmas which assume that positive verbal distinctions expose truth), and (2) to convey knowledge through conceptual designations. In order to convey the truth in conditioned mental forms, claims Nāgārjuna, one must be very sensitive to the tendency in verbal designation to superimpose a self-existing quality on that aspect of reality that one has

circumscribed with a term. As we have indicated before, it is this superimposition of self-existing reality which is the source for the misconceptions about one's self and the phenomenal world. The insight into emptiness brings *prapañca* and *dṛṣṭi* to a halt; but at the same time emptiness is the reality in which concepts (*prajñapti*), imagination (*saṁkalpa*), and logical analysis (*prasaṅga*) are formed, and this effort can lead either to cessation or further production of suffering.

Nāgārjuna affirms a limited use of conceptual forms and he appeals to phenomenal experience when he refutes his opponents who hold to assumptions of absolute distinctions and eternal essences. In doing this, he uses the common denominator of human experience, that fact that all existing things arise depending on something else. He recognizes that it is appropriate to request evidence for what is claimed in the highest insight (*paramārtha*). Likewise, it seems to me, that in engaging in his negative dialectic he is willing to be persuaded that he is wrong if given adequate negative evidence. Such negative evidence would arise if one could logically account for the arising of phenomena through an appeal to absolute, unchanging entities (something that has an own-being), or if one can find even one existing phenomenon that both remains without change and which at the same time causes something else to change. His acceptance of formal reasoning, and his use of inference based on direct perception is seen in several ways.[13] (1) He recognized that a principle of logic holds in a number of comparable situations; and that if one instance holds, then other instances of the same pattern are proved.[14] (2) Throughout the *Kārikās* Nāgārjuna uses expressions that indicate logical necessity: "*na upapadyate*",[15] "*na yujyate*",[16] and "*prasajyate*".[17] (3) Nāgārjuna's criticism of the *svabhāva* position depends heavily on the principle of contradiction, which is explicitly stated.[18] (4) The formal structure of the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* is a religious debate in which Nāgārjuna answers each argument of the opponents one by one, including a defense of his logical argumentation on the grounds that definitions and logic are themselves not absolute, but useful, indicators. (5) Nāgārjuna appeals to inference based on direct perception when he uses common experiences as examples in his argument, e.g. comparison of light-darkness; comparison of youth-aging and milk-curds.

In making use of concepts (e.g. 'emptiness') and logic as valid means of knowledge Nāgārjuna was standing in a basic Buddhist tradition. K.N. Jayatilleke has shown that early Buddhism did not regard learning truth as a subjective experience only or as entirely opposed to normal perception.[19] Inference based on perception (in distinction to reasoning from

a priori assumptions, *tarka*) and perception – both normal and extrasensory – were regarded as legitimate means of knowledge. Likewise, Nāgārjuna's statements in the texts we are considering would affirm Jayatilleke's understanding of early Buddhist recognition that the experiences in *jñāna* are not discontinuous with the processes of the mind in its everyday activity. There is, indeed, a major difference between the self-limitation placed on the capacity of conscious awareness through illusory attachments, and the development of capacities for higher knowledge through the loss of defilements. However, both the illusion and highest awareness are possible because of 'emptiness' (dependent co-origination). As ignorance ceases, the rigidity of the mind's grasp on parts of the reality softens; and the highest truth operates ('works', is effective) to free the operation of dependent co-origination. The highest truth does not, I think, refer to an unconditioned reality, but to effecting the truth within the capacities already in life – namely, empty relationships. This "effecting the truth in life" is indicated by the loss of attachment to anything that would claim *svabhāva*; and logical inference and perception *can* be useful to effect such truth.

PARAMĀRTHA IS NOT TAUGHT APART FROM VYAVAHĀRA

If *pratītysamutpāda* is basic to both *saṁvṛti* and *paramārtha* then participation in *saṁvṛti* (or *vyavahāra*) is part of what it means to know *paramārtha*. That is to say, the use of *saṁvṛti* is not just a necessary evil, it is a component part of realizing emptiness. The practical, everyday world as such is not to be rejected – only the ignorance, the attachment to *svabhāva*, should cease. Such attachment to *svabhāva* is not a part of the conditioned empty relations that form existence; and one need not – or cannot – reject the dependent co-origination of empty forms when one sees the truth of dependent co-origination. Thus, Nāgārjuna would never suggest that since all things are empty *any* belief or *any* view is equally conducive to knowing the way things are or, on the contrary, to hiding the truth. The *way* a person participates in *vyavahāra* is important for realizing the truth of *pratītyasamutpāda*. To state this another way, and more strongly, we would say that truth claims made through conditioned concepts and experiences have power to expose one to the highest truth insofar as one avoids imposing a self-existent quality on any concept or experience (such as using the notion of 'emptiness' as a dogma).

The role of *saṁvṛti* in *paramārtha* is a function of the recognition in the

Kārikās that the distinctions between such things as *nirvāṇa* and *saṁsāra*, the *tathāgata* and the world, or 'being bound' (*bandhana*) and release (*mokṣa*) are only practical distinctions. If one assumes that each opposite term refers to a different eternal quality or essence, and then desires one and hates the other, he fails to perceive that this is an empty, relative distinction. The emptiness of absolute opposites is seen in the following stanzas:

Therefore, 'that which is bound' is not released and 'that which is
not bound' is likewise not released.
If 'that which is bound' were released, 'being bound' and 'release'
would exist simultaneously.
Where there is no superimposing of *nirvāṇa* (on something else),
nor a removal of *saṁsāra*,
What *saṁsāra* is there? What *nirvāṇa* is imagined? [20]
The self-existence of the *tathāgata* is the self-existence of the world.
The *tathāgata* is without self-existence; the world is without
self-existence.[21]

There is nothing whatever which differentiates *saṁsāra* from *nirvāṇa*;
And there is nothing whatever which differentiates *nirvāṇa* from *saṁsāra*.
The extreme limit (*koṭi*) of *nirvāṇa* is also the extreme limit of *saṁsāra*;
There is not the slightest bit of difference between these two.
Since all *dharmas* are empty, what is finite? What is infinite?
What is both finite and infinite? What is neither finite nor
infinite? [22]

The differentiation which presupposes unchangeable essences is not useful for knowing the emptiness of ideas, 'things', or emotional responses. But when words are not regarded as representing some independent reality, they can function as practical forces in man's cessation of ignorance (attachment) to illusory objects. Even more, (empty) words used to express the *dharma* and the dialectic are not merely a destructive form which clears the ground for a constructive formulation of the truth, or simply a dissolution of all verbal formation that *then* allows a mystic intuition of an absolute unchanging reality to 'take over'. The dialectic itself can be a means of knowing. It provides the insight that there is no absolute or independent *saṁskṛta* or *dharma*. This is no mean feat; for the conventional use of words and logic tends to posit some kind of intrinsic value in the mental constructs that are used. This tendency to superimpose illusory significance to parts of human experience can be overcome, in part, by verbal guides (such as teachings, moral precepts, dialectic) which are informed by the highest insight into the emptiness of things. Thus Nāgārjuna did not contend that *paramārtha* appears

when *saṁvṛti* ceases. Rather the truth of existence is known when emptiness is realized as the source of both *saṁvṛti* and *paramārtha.* Ideally, *saṁvṛti* is *paramārtha* applied to daily living: when *nirvāṇa* is realized in the cessation of desire, or in the reduction of all dogma to absurdity. Then the practical distinctions of 'cessation', 'desire', 'dogma', 'absurdity', or '*nirvāṇa*' are from the highest perspective, recognized as empty of all *svabhāva.*

Because Nāgārjuna's ultimate affirmation is *pratītyasamutpāda*, any conventional affirmation that might suggest an absolute, in the form of a dogma or doctrine, is avoided. Even "*śūnya*", "*asvabhāva*", "*tathāgata*", or "*pratyaya*" cannot be transformed into absolutes; they are designations which can help in a practical way to dispel the effective (though empty) power of misconceptions. To the degree that one uses *saṁvṛti* without the misconception of *svabhāva* it can be an aid in the cessation of suffering. The soteriological function of Nāgārjuna's dialectic is commonly accepted.[23] Our concern here is to indicate that the affirmation of *pratītyasamutpāda* as the way things are precludes an interpretation that would make the goal of knowing *śūnyatā* a denial of phenomenal existence, as if this existence were characterized by an unchangeable essence (*svabhāva*) of impurity.

To realize that *nirvāṇa*, *saṁskṛta*, *asaṁskṛta*, and *saṁsāra* are empty of *svabhāva* requires a shift more drastic than to say that all conceptual forms prevent a person from intuiting the One undifferentiated whole. Both *saṁvṛti* and *paramārtha* participate in dependent co-origination – which reality is without beginning or end, and without eternal qualities. There is no way to eliminate dependent co-origination. The problem it is affirming is that in conventional expression the processes of articulation (definitions of words, inferences drawn from asserting 'is' or 'is not') are conducive to superimposing a *svabhāva* on the selection of conscious impressions we experience. The highest awareness, which is needed for release from *svabhāva*, is not the result of moving from the finite to the infinite, but the release from ignorance about the dependent co-origination of anything at all. *Paramārthasatya* is, then, living in full awareness of dependent co-origination rather than in a limited, 'tunneled' awareness about the conditions of existence. It is living without fear of the interdependent nature of things, and without the desire for an unconditioned self-existent reality – which is just a fantasy, a mirage. Indeed, the reality of dependent co-origination is a 'relative existence'; but according to the *paramārthasatya* the 'relative character' is not a self-existent evil. It is not to be negated for its opposite; for the realm of opposites is a function of the crystallization

of *svabhāvas.* From the perspective of *paramārthasatya*, both *paramārtha* and *saṁvṛti* are empty (dependently co-originated).

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NOTES

[1] MK. XXIV, 8-10.

dve satye samupāśritya buddhānāṁ dharmadeśanā
lokasaṁvṛtisatyam ca satyaṁ ca paramārthataḥ

ye 'nayorna vijānanti vibhāgaṁ satyayor dvayoḥ
te tattvaṁ na vijānanti gambhīraṁ buddhaśāsane

vyavahāram anāśritya paramārtho na deśyate
paramārtham anāgamya nirvāṇaṁ nādhigamyate

MK. XXIV, 40.

yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaṁ paśyaty idaṁ sa paśyati
duḥkhaṁ samudayaṁ cāiva nirodhaṁ mārgam eva ca

[2] Th. Stcherbatsky, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., Leningrad, 1927, pp. 46-48; S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* Macmillan, New York, 1923, I, pp. 658-9, 662-9; T.R.V. Murti, *Central Philosophy of Buddhism* George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, 1955, pp. 121-126; E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, 1962, pp. 239-243.

[3] Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, p. 241.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 243.

[5] MK. XXIV, 18-20.

yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatāṁ tāṁ pracakṣmahe
sā prajñaptir upādāya pratipat sāiva madhyamā
apratītya samutpanno dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate
yasmāt tasmād aśūnyo hi dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate
yady aśūnyam idaṁ sarvam udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ
catūrṇām āryasatyānām abhāvas te prasajyate

MK. XXIV, 14.

sarvaṁ ca yujyate tasya śūnyatā yasya yujyate
sarvaṁ na yujyate tasya śūnyatā yasya na yujyate

MK. XXIV, 36.

sarvasaṁvyavahārāṁś ca laukikān pratibādhase
yat pratītyasamutpādaśūnyatāṁ pratibādhase

[6] The Vigrahavyāvartanī of Nāgārjuna (ed. by E.H. Johnston and E. Kunst), *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques* IX. (1951) pp. 108-151, 70.

prabhavati ca śūnyateyam yasya prabhavanti tasya sarvārthāḥ prabhavati
na tasya kiṃcin na prabhavati śūnyatā yasya

[7] N. Dutt, in *Aspects of Mahayana Buddhism and Its Relation to Hinayana* (London, 1930), pp. 216-17, gives three senses in which the term '*Saṁvṛti*' is used in Buddhism: (1) identical with ignorance (*avidyā*) on account of its completely enveloping reality, (2) identical with phenomenal, for it implies a thing which is dependent, or subject to cause and condition, and (3) signs or words current in the world, based on direct perception.

[8] MK. VII, 33, 34.

utpādasthitibhaṅgānām asiddher nāsti saṁskṛtaṁ
saṁskṛtasya āprasiddhau ca katham setsyaty asaṁskṛtam

yathā māyā yathā svapno gandharvanagaraṁ yathā
tathotpādas sthānaṁ tathā tathā bhanga udāhṛtam

[9] MK. XXIII, 1, 2.

saṁkalpaprabhave rāgo dveso mohaś ca kathyate
śubhāśubhaviparyāsān saṁbhavanti pratītya hi

śubhāśubhaviparyāsān saṁbhavanti pratītya ye
te svabhāvān na vidyante tasmāt kleśā na tattvataḥ

MK. XXIII, 8.

rūpaśabdarasasparśā gandhā dharmāś ca kevalāḥ
gandharvanagarākārā marīcisvapnasaṁnibhāḥ

MK. XXIII, 15.

yena gṛhṇāti yo grāho grahītā yac ca gṛhyate
upaśāntāni sarvāṇi tasmād grāho na vidyate

MK. XXIII, 23.

evaṁ nirudhyate 'vidyā viparyayanirodhanāt
avidyāyām niruddhāyāṁ saṁskārādyaṁ nirudhyate

MK. XXIII, 6.

svabhāvato na vidyante śubhāśubhaviparyayāḥ
pratītya katamān kleśāḥ śubhāśubhaviparyayān

[10] MK. XXV, 24.

sarvopalambhopaśamaḥ prapañcopaśamaḥ śivaḥ
na kvacit kasyacit kaścid dharmo buddhena deśitaḥ

MK. XVIII, 5.

karmakleśakṣayān mokṣaḥ karmakleśā vikalpataḥ
te prapañcāt prapañcas tu śūnyatāyāṁ nirudhyate

[11] MK. XXVII, 29.

atha vā sarvabhāvānāṁ śūnyatvāc chāsvatādayaḥ
kva kasya katamāḥ kasmāt saṁbhaviṣyanti dṛṣṭayaḥ

MK. XXVII, 30.

sarvadṛṣṭiprahāṇāya yaḥ saddharmam adeśayat
anukampām upādāya taṁ namasyāmi gautamaṁ

[12] MK. XVIII, 7.

nivṛttam abhidhātavyaṁ nivṛtte cittagocare
anutpannāniruddhā hi nirvāṇam iva dharmatā

MK. XIII, 8.

śūnyatā sarvadṛṣṭīnāṁ proktā niḥsaraṇaṁ jinaiḥ
yeṣāṃ tu śūnyatā dṛṣṭis tān asādhyān babhāṣire

MK. XXII, 11.
[śūnyam iti na vaktavyam] aśūnyam iti vā bhavet
ubhayaṁ nobhayaṁ ceti prajñaptyarthaṁ tu kathyate

[13] R. Robinson in *Early Mādhyamika in India and China*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1967, pp. 50-58, provides a fuller discussion on Nāgārjuna's use of logic in the *Kārikās.*

[14] MK. III, 8; XVI, 7.

[15] MK. IV, 4, 5; VII, 21, 23.

[16] MK. II, 18; XVII, 24.

[17] MK. XX, 9, 18; XXV, 4.

[18] MK. VII, 30; IX, 7, 8.

[19] *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1963, pp. 426-437.

[20] MK. XVI, 8.
baddho na mucyate tāvad abaddho naiva mucyate
syātāṁ baddhe mucyamāne yugapad bandhamokṣaṇe
MK. XVI, 10.
na nirvāṇasamāropo na saṁsārāpakarṣaṇaṁ
yatra kas tatra saṁsāro nirvāṇaṁ kiṁ vikalpyate

[21] MK. XXII, 16.
tathāgato yat svabhāvas tat svabhāvam idaṁ jagat
tathāgato [niḥsvabhāvo] niḥsvabhāvam idaṁ jagat

[22] MK. XXV, 19.
na saṁsārasya nirvāṇāt kiṁcid asti viśeṣaṇaṁ
na nirvāṇasya samsārāt kiṁcid asti viśeṣaṇaṁ
MK. XXV, 20.
nirvāṇasya ca yā koṭiḥ saṁsāranasya ca
na tayor antaraṁ kiṁcit susūkṣmam api vidyate
MK. XXV, 22.
śūnyeṣu sarvadharmeṣu kim anantaṁ kim antavat
kim anantam antavac ca nānantaṁ nāntavac ca kiṁ

[23] See T.R.V. Murti, *Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, pp. 127-8; E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, pp. 241-3; and references in F. Streng, *Emptiness–A Study in Religious Meaning*, New York, Abingdon, 1967, Ch. 10.

MERVYN SPRUNG

THE MĀDHYAMIKA DOCTRINE OF TWO REALITIES AS A METAPHYSIC

It is the Sanskrit term *satyadvaya* which sets the problem. The first word of the compound, 'satya', ranges in meaning from 'reality' to the 'truth' about reality; it is commonly taken in the latter sense, but I tend to the former. The second word in the compound, 'dvaya', does not mean 'two' merely as a number in the series, 'one-two-three', but means, and I make much of this, 'duality', 'twofoldness', or 'double-nature'. So the term *satyadvaya*, is, in my view, more closely seized as 'the twofoldness of reality (or truth)' or 'the duality of reality (or truth)'.

What is the problem set by this phrase? Surely if we give a meaning to the word 'reality' (or truth) there can be only one, otherwise we simply have an instance of irresponsible duovocality. Do we not? And is 'reality' not one of those words which is so pervasive in our thinking that to use it loosely would be to vitiate thinking? Again why *two* realities? Why should there not be a threefoldness about reality? Why not a hundredfoldness?

And then, why two *realities*? Why not two aspects of one reality? Why not one 'pseudo' reality and one 'real' one? Why not one 'appearance' and one 'reality'? What is the problem? Why two *realities*? How does the problem of there being more than one reality arise? Perhaps in different ways, but before turning to Mādhyamika consider what 'dualism' has often been taken to mean.

When the Western man hears the word 'dualism' he will probably think of Descartes even as the Eastern man will call to mind the Sāṃkhya philosophy. Descartes understood his world in terms of two substances – the 'thinking' and the 'extended' – which were, of course, mutually exclusive; neither had explanatory powers in the sphere of the other. Yet both were required to make this one world intelligible, even if their conjunction remained a metaphysical mystery. Descartes never speaks, however, of a twofoldness of reality: the two substances compose, inexplicably, *one* reality.

In Sāṃkhya thought the dualism is, at first blush, as precise as Descartes' and even parallel. *Prakṛti* is the stuff of everything that becomes object and *puruṣa* is the subject which never becomes object. These two categories are as mutually exclusive as thinking and extension and as irreparably sundered.

M. Sprung (ed.), Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta. 40-53.

True, their connotation is not the same: *prakṛti* accounts for everything objectifiable both mental and non-mental; *puruṣa* is not empirical consiousness, obviously, but pure awareness; it is the condition of the possibility of there being objects at all. Yet *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* together, are necessary for the world as we know it to evolve; they are not two realities, but the dual principles of one.

It appears that twofoldness of reality receives little attention in Cartesian and Sāṁkhya thought. And yet Sāṁkhya knows of a second reality which is other than the everyday. If and when the *puruṣa* can cease to identify with the prakritic thoughts, feelings and body sensations of the individual person, it is said to be liberated. Then the metaphysical dualism of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* is seen to be merely one term of a far more radical dualism, that of bondage and freedom. Nothing parallels this in Descartes and yet throughout his primary thought he implies a dualism of attitude or existential stance.

He distinguishes between theory (within which the mind-body dualism has its place) and praxis where the human believes, resolves and acts without regard for such theory.[1] This dualism does not lie within metaphysics but embraces metaphysics as one of its poles. It is comparable, in this respect, to Sāṁkhya, though it does not carry the same range of implication.

I arrive at much the same result when I consider Plato from this point of interest. The striking polarity in his thought of 'becoming' on the one hand and 'being' on the other, of the many and the one, does not constitute a dualism of *realities* – metaphysically. Plato is precise[2] in holding that there is only one reality which is the object of knowledge and that common opinion is confused approximation to such knowledge. There is only one sphere of being to be known. It is equally fruitless to recall Plato's distinction between matter and form, that is, between the immutable *eidos* and the infinitely mutable matrix or receptacle.[3] The latter, though needed as an explanatory supposition in understanding Plato's world, is in no sense a separate reality; it is, indeed, an approximation to non-being. The forms, together with the matrix, compound into one reality.

And yet. This is somehow inadequate. The striking contrast between the confused murk of the perishable where contradictory predicates are the basis of mere opinion – the cave of everyday ignorance – and the clarity of the secured vision of being – the sunshine of the upper world – is so powerful, that one senses an unconfessed dualism in Plato. As *lived*, the opposition of ignorance and knowledge, of the perishable and the imperishable, cannot be reduced to a matter of degree. There would appear to be no way to move from the one to the other, except by metaphysical legerdemain. That this

dualism of existence is an other than a dualism of categories is supported by Plato's description of the way of education or enlightenment – the anabasis of the psyche. By the example of an individual Plato is able to indicate how the cave and the sunlight are related, namely, transformationally.

In none of these three philosophies is there an explicit doctrine of two truths or two realities. Metaphysical dualism is a dualism of explanatory categories. The twofoldness of existence, which I have emphasized in each case, though a more radical attitude, still does not conceive of the two modes of existence as realities in their own right. Mādhyamika, in its term *satyadvaya*, suggests a view in which the opposition of the two 'modes of existence' will become still more radical. We should now proceed to see if this is so.

I turn to Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamaka Śāstra*[4] and to Candrakīrti's commentary. The theme of the double nature of reality is less pervasive than one would expect although it enters decisively at what is perhaps the high point of the *Śāstra*: in Chapter XXIV, for the purpose of defending Mādhyamika against the charge of nihilism. My treatment of the problem begins there, but draws as well on passages in Nāgārjuna's analysis of cause, of the substance theory of person, of the possibility of human perfection, of *Nirvāṇa* and others.

In Chapter XXIV, which is an enquiry into Buddhist doctrine, Nāgārjuna puts himself under attack by an opponent of realist and pluralist convictions. This opponent takes Nāgārjuna's distinctive term, *śūnyatā* – often translated as 'emptiness' or 'voidness', and which I take both as 'devoidness' and as 'reality' – to mean that people and things of the everyday world are *mere* illusions, that they do not exist. Nāgārjuna rejects this interpretation vigorously and warns anyone who so mis-thinks that he is on his way to a calamitous end. But if saying that everyday things are devoid is not saying they are nothing, what is it saying? At this point[5] Nāgārjuna has recourse to the notion of *satyadvaya*, as if no other term was available to him. And it is the concern of all philosophical concerns that is now in the open: in what sense are things real? What is the worth of terms like 'real' and 'not-real', 'is' and 'is not', 'being' and 'non-being'? Are such terms adequate to illuminate the problems of human existence? It will become clear that in Nāgārjuna's view they are not.

In this setting what is said about the *satyadvaya*? I shall state a series of observations and formulations which Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti make about the two realities: firstly, about everyday reality – *saṃvṛtisatya* – and secondly, about the way things really are – *paramārthasatya* – before studying the ways in which they may be related.

Saṁvṛti is said to be:

(1) Whatever is completely enveloped and obscured.[6]

(2) Ignorance. Of course, not lack of information but misunderstanding; it is the total obscuration of the nature of all things. This, and No. 1 are virtually synonymous; they are descriptive terms, well-known, but not put to technical use in the argument.[7]

(3) Existence insofar as it coheres by virtue of *belief* in person. This is the significance of *loka,* according to Candrakīrti.[8] It might be called personal world.

(4) Existence, understood in terms of the afflictions or debilities (*kleśas*) of desire, enmity and delusion; and in terms of the valuations good and bad based on perprehension (*viparyāsa*).

(5) Conditioned coming-into-being (*pratītyasamutpāda*)[9]. This term is ambivalent, but, as *saṁvṛti*, it describes the temporal process in which every (supposed) entity is dependent on a complex of causes for its occurrence.

(6) The totality of all transactions (*vyavahāra*) in which the dualism inherent in thing-language and thing-knowing is operative.[10] *Saṁvṛti* is not merely the realm of things, it is the realm of language-based transactions involving things. This is not merely overt behaviour; it embraces all use of language which refers descriptively.

(7) The impossibility of true predication. In *saṁvṛti* predicates, by their nature, are stolen or false (*moṣadharma*).[11]

(8) What does not yield sense (*anupapatti*); what gives itself out to be comprehensible in conceptual terms but which fails in this.[12]

(9) The realm of what is devoid (*śūnya*). This will say that whatever gives itself as real but turns out to have no essential nature of its own is *saṁvṛti.* This is not illusion, because in *saṁvṛti* things must be taken as if real.

So much for a rather abstract summation of what is said about *saṁvṛti*. And now a summation of what Candrakīrti and Nāgārjuna say about *paramārthasatya*. For this purpose I treat as of equal relevance passages concerned with the terms *śūnyatā*, *tattva*, *dharmatā* and *nirvāṇa*. *Paramārthasatya* is said to be:

(1) The cessation of the modes 'I' and 'mine', of the belief in person, of the lokic structure.[13] Repeatedly the debilities (*kleśas*) are said to cease to be in *nirvāṇa.*[14]

(2) Tranquil (*śānta*) understood not as a state of mind, but as the cessation of the restlessness of the lokic structure[15] (personal world).

(3) What does not arise or cease;[16] is not dependent either causally or logically.[17] In a way which is baffling, *paramārtha* is what is not in process.

(4) Known by wise saints 'in and through itself' (*pratyātma*).[18] The ren-

dering 'in and through *themselves*' is not very interesting. This formulation marks the paramarthic out from what is known in logical dependence: it cannot be 'explained'.

(5) Not of the nature of named-things (*niṣprapañca*)[19, 20] nor of thought-constructs (*nirvikalpa*);[21] verbal judgments are not efficacious, do not function with respect to *paramārthasatya*;[22] named-things come to rest in *śūnyatā*[23] and all points of view find their resolution in *śūnyatā*.

(6) That of which stolen predicates are not asserted.[24]

(7) Sensible, that is, what yields sense;[25] this is a difficult notion. *Paramārtha* is to yield sense, even though everyday words and concepts are inapplicable to it. *Paramārtha* is not illogical or irrational but rather the reverse.

(8) Not of varying aspects (*anānārtha*);[26] it is not within any context.

(9) Incapable of being taught or demonstrated (*nopadiśyate*)[27] but not incapable of being 'pointed out' (*deśyate*).[28]

(10) The reality of *saṁvṛti* as its devoidness.[29] *Paramārthasatya* is not the reality (nor truth) of something other than *saṁvṛti*.

(11) As *nirvāṇa*, of the same '*koṭi*' as *saṁsārā* (i.e. *saṁvṛti*).[30] This appears to say that *paramārtha* is not a realm of fact apart from *saṁvṛti*; it is not to be distinguished predicatively from it.

(12) Not something which is to be thought of as real (*bhāva*) in the same way that things, inner and outer, are real.[31]

(13) The middle way; this simple term conceals the central thought of Mādhyamika.

(14) Liberation from the samvritic.

Each of these points is not distinct from all the others but taken together they say much about the two realities. Comparing these two lists, even superficially, certain ways of taking the twoness emerge.

Saṁvṛti is existence structured by belief in person; *paramārtha* is the *coming to an end* of this belief.

Saṁvṛti is inseparable from the lokic structure, debilities, perprehension and valuation; *paramārtha* is the *coming to an end* of the lokic structure ('tranquility').

Saṁvṛti is ignorance, it is being completely enveloped; *paramārtha* is the *removal* of this.

Saṁvṛti is conditioned coming-to-be: it is *taking* existence to be real things undergoing real change as a result of real causes. *Paramārtha* (as *nirvāṇa*) is said to be existence *not taken* in this causal way, nor in the way of logical dependence.

Saṁvṛti consists of transactions involving named-things; named-things *find their end* in *paramārtha.*

Saṁvṛti is false or deceptive predication; *paramārtha* is the *cessation* of predication.

Saṁvṛti does not yield sense; *paramārtha* is what makes sense out of *saṁvṛti.*

Paramārtha is said to be 'not of varying aspects', and incapable of being 'taught' (explained); by inference *saṁvṛti* may be said to be the home of points of view and of argument and explanation.

Saṁvṛti is through and through '*śūnya*', 'devoid'; *paramārtha* is what *renders saṁvṛti* devoid; it is not the mere fact of *saṁvṛti* being devoid; it is the reality of *saṁvṛti.*

Paramārtha is not a realm of fact or existence apart from *saṁvṛti*; it has the same '*koṭi*' or bounds, and no predicative distinction can be made between the two.

As *śūnyatā*, *paramārtha* is said to be the 'middle way'; it does not name a realm of paramarthic fact but a *way of being* among and with samvritic facts.

Saṁvṛti is the *means* to liberation,[32] *paramārtha is* liberation.

In this terse juxtaposition I note several recurring relations. Many of the characteristics of *saṁvṛti* are thought of as *finding their end* or as being *removed* in *paramārtha*: the lokic structure, ignorance, named-things, predication. Not much of *saṁvṛti* remains after that. I should emphasize the recurring phrase "named-things as such *find their end in śūnyatā*". This is one of the seminal thoughts of Mādhyamika from which much can be understood.

Again the difference between the two is often – not always – not so much a difference in the way of conceptualizing them, but in the way of *taking* them, *behaving* toward them. The samvritic way is to think of oneself as a real agent, appropriating and disappropriating real things, by applying causal knowledge. The paramarthic way would not rest on any of these notions. It is not so much a *theory* about *saṁvṛti* as it is an *end* to *saṁvṛti*; it is a different way of being. At this point the wide divergence of Mādhyamika thought from metaphysical dualism is evident.

What appears to be theoretical concern is not at all wholly absent. *Saṁvṛti* is said to be what does not, in the final count, make sense, (*anupapatti*). That is, every attempt at truth must fail because the truth of anything cannot be recovered completely in samvritic terms. In uncountably many passages the *śāstra* demolishes a samvritic concept by claiming it does

not make sense or is not comprehensible (*nayujyate*, or *nopapadyate*). *Paramārtha* is, in at least one passage, explicitly said to be what *does* yield or make sense (*upapatti*).[33] We would have to bear in mind here that such a claim is startling. If conceptual explanation is ruled to have no application to *paramārtha* in what way can the latter be said to yield sense? Evidently 'sense', or what brings conceptual activity to rest, is not itself going to be further conceptual activity. At this point we strike close to the heart of Mādhyamika thought.

Again *saṁvṛti* is said to be the 'means' to the realization of *paramārthasatya*, or to be precise, it is said that unless based on the transactional realm, *paramārtha* cannot be pointed out.[34] However we understand this relationship, it is clearly not that of one *satya* explaining the other; it is rather that one – *saṁvṛti* – fulfils its function by being talked about or signified. Or, we can talk about the paramarthic only by using samvritic words.

The last of the relationships between the two realities which I name in this survey is the one which Mādhyamika is remembered for – *śūnyatā*, devoidness. When all the other relationships have exhausted their meaning for us they will, I believe, have proved but pointers to devoidness. The everyday is understandable only in a privative sense as not being what it fails to be; what is ultimate is understandable only in a privative sense as not being what the everyday is, or, more precisely, as being what the everyday is not.[35]

It is not possible to avoid a brief reference to the problem of language at this turn.

Many passages appear to forbid *any* use of samvritic language in speaking of *paramārtha*. "How could verbal utterances and judgments be efficacious in *paramārtha*",[36] "the real is not manifest in named-things".[37] Indeed the Mādhyamika is a radical nominalist: he denies not only that universals are real; he denies that particular things and even simple qualities of particular things are real. Language does not name and it does not describe: it refers obliquely and it is prescriptive.

The word 'chariot', to take the hoary example, does not name a thing over and above wheels, axles, chassis, because there *is* no such thing. Yet the word serves our practical purposes: we do not mount the horse if we are invited into the chariot. Such words are said to be *prajñaptir upādāya* – obliquely prescriptive. But metaphysical language is said to function in the same way. *Śūnyatā* is expressly referred to as a *prajñāptir upādāya*. This appears to imply that we must not expect anything substance-like to answer to the term *śūnyatā*, but that it is meant to tell us what to *do* with or how to *be* toward everyday things without which *śūnyatā* itself would have no

meaning. If this is sound, then verbal language applies to the paramarthic in the same way it applies to the samvritic and talk of the one is no more forbidden than talk of the other. Mādhyamika then need not be silent on the matters it most wants to talk about.

And indeed it refuses to remain silent. Though language, used argumentatively, has no validity for *paramārtha*, it may be used to 'monstrate' or to 'point to' it. Demonstration (explicit teaching) is not possible, but monstration is. I am referring here to the difference between *upadiśyate* and *deśyate*. The Mādhyamika thinker could never accept a strict prohibition of talk about *paramārtha*, because it is his single purpose to draw people's attention to it by talk.

Language, according to Mādhyamika, at no level, truly names, though it appears to. It provides a naming service to aid us in transactions. The illusion of isomorphic naming arises inevitably for humans in every kind of practical transaction and also in metaphysics. The things named in the two spheres are different though it is not easy to say how.

I turn now to a more definitive discussion of the peculiar relationship between *saṁvṛtisatya* and *paramārthasatya* as Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti appear to have understood it. We should recall that the distinction of the two realities was introduced by Nāgārjuna to counter the mistaking of the term *śūnyatā* as 'unreal'. To defend himself against nihilism Nāgārjuna develops his view of the two realities. He might equally well have introduced the term *śūnyatā* to clarify the relationship between the two realities, because *śūnyatā* is the term around which our understanding of the two realities must grow.

Existence (*sarvam idam*) is *śūnya*, devoid, Nāgārjuna declares, because, in the final count, existence can be understood only as devoid.[38] The question here is whether it is legitimate to use the word 'understood' in this way.

What is existence devoid of? What is lacking? In a word, all things are lacking *svabhāva*: a simple, immutable own-nature. What is real, by contrast, is precisely what the everyday world lacks. Only the real (*tattva*) which is *paramārthasatya* can be said to be *svabhāva*, i.e. real in its own right. And yet *paramārtha* has been expressly declared not to be real in the way in which named-things are wrongly taken to be real in the everyday, which is to say in the svabhavic way.[39]

This is a glimpse of the bedevilling paradox inherent in Mādhyamika. The categories 'real thing' and 'unreal thing' have been shown to be untenable within the samvritic; ought they not to be equally inapplicable to what is real? Not in every sense apparently, for the real is svabhavic, though not to be understood on the model of svabhavic things.

Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti warn against the temptation to reify *śūnyatā*. *Śūnyatā*, thought of as a reality apart from samvritic things, is not *śūnyatā* at all, but merely a further instance of substance ontology, of illegitimate svabhavic thinking. And yet we have just said that reality is what the samvritic world is devoid of. It is important in the face of this paradox not to fall into the error of supposing that the 'things' of *saṁvṛti* are *un*real. They cannot stand as the final truth about themselves, yet they must be accepted for samvritic purposes as they are what makes up *saṁvṛti*. Even the *yogī* must let them be as the indispensable means to seeing through them or living beyond them, which is the only description we can have of reality.

Is this the demise of all ontology, of all thought about the Real, about Being? It would appear so and yet I would wish to hold open the possibility for a Mādhyamika to speak sense about reality. If he has not this possibility he is reduced to the extremity of the radical cynic who must stitch his lips together. So far he has merely denied the use of the substance model, as understood in *saṁvṛti*, for paramarthic purpose. And, of course, he has forbidden the use of substance language and cause and effect language, of *paramārtha*. The Mādhyamika has denied that he is a nihilist and I would like to leave the way open for him to be more than a sceptic. Perhaps he can suggest an answer in terms other than those of traditional ontology.

I would point out that the term *śūnyatā* is ambivalent in a frustrating way. It is on the one hand a mere grammatical abstraction from the term '*śūnya*': it means *śūnya*-ness. This use marks the mere fact that all things *are* devoid. On the other hand *śūnyatā* tells us what it is that things are devoid of, namely, reality; in this use it is a synonym for *tattva*, *tathatā*, *paramārtha*, *dharmatā* and *nirvāṇa*. I find it a sine qua non of following the many arguments given, to know when *śūnyatā* marks the fact of devoidness in things and when it says what it is things are devoid of. It is the key thought of Mādhyamika which lures us on in this ambivalence.

We cannot escape this paradox; whatever is said *about* the Real refers to the samvritic world.[40] There is no second realm of existence to which shunyatic language applies. One can say that as the world of named-things can be understood only as *not* real as it gives itself out to be, therefore the shunyatic predicates[41] are the only ones which do allow us to understand it. In short *saṁvṛti* must be understood in paramarthic terms. It fails to be paramarthic, which is to say it is *śūnya*. But its *śūnya*-ness is not only the fact of this failure; it is also what is failing. Again, *paramārthasatya* is *truly* what *saṁvṛti* is only *taken* to be. *Saṁvṛti* is taking the everyday as if it were svabhavic – real in itself – but *paramārtha* is alone truly svabhavic. It *is*

what the everyday is wrongly taken to be. This is my understanding of Candrakīrti's pregnant formulation, "The *yogī* realizes that *śūnyatā* is to be understood as the ultimate reality of *saṁvṛti*."[42]

I am tempted to say at this point that *paramārtha* is the 'material *apriori*'[43] functioning in all our attempts to know everyday things. If Nāgārjuna can say that our everyday is lacking the marks of the Real it is clear that in some sense he knows the Real. Otherwise, how could he sense its absence? From the beginning it serves as a criterion of all other knowledge. This *apriori* relationship, which cannot but remind us of Plato and Scheler, suggests that the everyday is related to the Real in such a way that in its very inadequacy it tells us what would be adequate. It is not a haphazard relationship because what is absent in the devoidness of the everyday is nevertheless evoked by the everyday. Echoes are not random. Discursive silence has its own logic.

This train of thought will at least make it clear to us that we are not dealing with a metaphysical dualism. Mādhyamika's two realities are not separate in that each can be understood in its own terms and then by metaphysical magic be related to the other in an intelligible way. *Saṁvṛti* and *paramārtha* are so related that the one must be understood in terms of the other. Each by itself is absurd, being an abstraction. Each, precisely through its fragmentary nature, evokes the other.

At this point we are very close to the paradoxical heart of Mādhyamika. Consider the paradox of *saṁvṛti*. Nāgārjuna sets himself the sweeping task of demonstrating the hollowness of every last category constituting *saṁvṛtisatya*. He destroys the categories of cause, motion, person, act, origination, cessation, reality, and many more. Now for the greater part these categories are not theories about *saṁvṛti*, they are constitutive of it. How does he invalidate them? By revealing the self-contradictions in each, it is commonly said. Certainly he does that though not as uniformly as has sometimes been supposed. As well, however, he appeals again and again to the self-evidence of immediate experience. In the first *kārikā* of Chapter I he says "real things are never under any circumstances found to come to be either out of themselves, or out of something other than themselves, or out of both, or without any cause at all." The key words here are "are never found to" (*navidyante*). Nāgārjuna is establishing a court of appeal to which the everyday claims of *saṁvṛti* may be referred, in this case the claim that real things have causes. He repeats this referal countless times. *Kārikā* 4 of Chapter XXI says "How can there be origination without perishing? Imperishability is never found (*vidyate*) in things."

Nāgārjuna is, as it were, going behind or beneath the conventional cate-

gories to find a touchstone of their truth. This radical empiricism is interesting in itself but what it does to *saṁvṛti* is bewildering. Nāgārjuna is arguing that the everyday world which is taken to be constituted of such categories as cause, thing, person, etc., not only is not *ultimately* real but does not exist even as erroneously conceived. To put it another way, *saṁvṛtisatya* which can be only as things and people in a welter of coming and going,[44] turns out not to be truly described even in these terms. *Saṁvṛti* does not consist of persons and things. It never did. The reality Nāgārjuna sets out to demolish was never there to need demolishing. And yet if it had not appeared to be there it would never have provoked its demolition. This is the paradox of *saṁvṛti*. I am tempted to put it this way: *saṁvṛti* is nothing more than the target of the paramarthic destruction; *paramārtha* requires *saṁvṛti* in order, by showing its hollowness, to make itself known. In the end, it is not possible, I believe, to make the relation of *saṁvṛti* and *paramārtha* intelligible in any theoretical terms available to us.

In passing I would barely mention a further way in which the paramarthic is related to the samvritic. Commonly we say the Mādhyamika dialectic deprives the samvritic categories of any claim to be real by showing them to be self-contradictory. This implies, plainly, that only what is not self-contradictory can stand for the real. Only once, I think, does Candrakīrti say something like this,[45] but the spirit of 'rationalism' pervades Mādhyamika. The everyday is condemned because it does not make sense. This non-samvritic criterion is as pervasive as the criterion of immediate experience, even more so, and it too is never justified explicitly. Putting these two criteria together, could we say that they point to an immediate experience which is undistorted by nonsense, or to a reality which as a whole makes sense, in some sense?

Yet so long as we think of the two realities as a polarity and so long as we find their relationship not quite making sense, so long are we mired within *saṁvṛtisatya*. The interdependence is the mark of the samvritic. As concepts, each of the two presupposes the other and this is fatal to the intelligibility of each. Neither provides the intellect with a sure support in understanding the other. Each is what it is, only because the other is already implicit in what it is. The circle is openly vicious. Any unqualified explanation is intellectual dishonesty. Mādhyamika's own metaphysical concepts are no less inadequate than others, and must fall to its own attack.

But is this then not the end? It is the end of rationalist metaphysics, of cartesian or *Sāṁkhya* dualism and of platonic ontology. It is the end of all thought which sets itself the task of answering metaphysical questions in the language in which the questions are asked. It is the end of attempting to

explain the relationship of *saṁvṛti* and *paramārtha* and this because *paramārtha* is not the stuff of which explanations are made, nor, for that matter, is *saṁvṛti*. Mādhyamika will be content with nothing less than convincing us that *any* explanation advanced will be nonsensical. It appears that he has succeeded in making his own theory, insofar as he has such, unintelligible. What is the Mādhyamika way out of the quicksands of unintelligibility?

Recall Candrakīrti's explanation of the way to avoid reifying *saṁvṛti* and *paramārtha*: he resorts to the way a wise man lives.[46] He says, in effect, that the wise man, having awakened to the truth that *saṁvṛti* arises solely from primal ignorance, is not real in its own right and that devoidness *is* the reality of *saṁvṛti*, *proceeds on his way* (*pratipadyamāna*) without falling into the dualism of real and not-real. He *lives* so that the everyday world is neither rejected as unreal nor accepted as real. Candrakīrti does not attempt further to define or distinguish *saṁvṛti* and *paramārtha* conceptually, he resorts to a description of the way a wise man, in practice, deals with the relation of the two. As if only in human existence itself could the two be related adequately. As if the existence, the being, if you like, of the wise man were itself the true relation and the only possible true relation of reality and everyday things, or the only possible way in which everyday things can be real.

That this is not a chance illustration introduced by Candrakīrti is clear from Nāgārjuna's classical formulation: "It is precisely dependent coming-to-be which we interpret as the devoidness in things, this term 'devoidness' (*śūnyatā*) is a prescriptive expression (*prajñapti*) presupposing (*upādāya*) the samvritic everyday; it is the middle way itself."[47] This appears unequivocal and decisive: *śūnyatā* is not a term to which something real corresponds; it does not refer to anything of the nature of substance, to anything bhavic. It prescribes a certain way of being in and among things; a certain way of dealing with or treating things; a certain way of comporting oneself: the middle way.

In sum, the Mādhyamika twofoldness of reality is not a metaphysic. It is not parallel to any view based on a polarity of explanatory categories like mind – matter or *puruṣa* – *prakṛti* or form – matrix. It bears resemblance to Sāṁkhya's bondage and freedom, or Plato's states of ignorance and wisdom, and that because these are no longer theoretical categories, but ways to be.

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NOTES

[1] See Wilhelm Halbfass. *Descartes' Frage nach der Existenz der Welt.* Verlag Anton Hain 1968; pp. 1-15. Halbfass gives H. Wein credit for this insight. My statement of this thesis is crippling in its brevity.

[2] Republic BK. V, 476e-480.

[3] Timaeus 49a.

[4] Mūlamadhyamakakārikās (MK) and the Prasannapadā.

[5] MK. XXIV, 9.

[6] Prasannapadā 492.10.

[7] This differs from the view of G. M. Nagao, who thinks "falsehood through ignorance" the most important meaning. Vide *Silver Jubilee Volume of the Zinbun-Kagaku - Kenkgurvo*, p. 553.

[8] Prasannapadā 492.8.9.

[9] Prasannapadā 492.11 and 54.9 to 55.1.

[10] Prasannapadā 492.12.

[11] MK. XIII, 1.

[12] Prasannapadā 67.12 to 68.1.

[13] MK. XVIII, 5.

[14] e.g. MK. XVIII, 4.

[15] MK. XVIII, 9.

[16] MK. XVIII, 7. Quoted by Candrakīrti at 493.8.9.

[17] MK. XXV, 9.

[18] Prasannapadā 493.11.

[19] The difficult term *prapañca* is sometimes taken to mean "phenomena" and sometimes "language"; I take it as both: namely as named-things (inner-and outer).

[20] MK. XVIII, 9.

[21] MK. XVIII, 9.

[22] Prasannapadā 493.10.

[23] MK. XVIII, 5.

[24] Prasannapadā 237.12.

[25] Prasannapadā 67.12 to 68.1.

[26] MK. XVIII, 9.

[27] Prasannapadā 493.11.

[28] MK. XXIV, 20.

[29] Prasannapadā 495.3.

[30] MK. XXV, 20.

[31] MK. XXV, 4.

[32] Prasannapadā 494.14 and 15.

[33] Prasannapadā 67.12 to 68.1.

[34] MK. XXIV, 20.

[35] After this discussion I will not need to explain at length why I find the word "phenomenal" (introduced by Th. Stcherbatsky) an inadequate rendering of *saṁvṛti*. For a somewhat different understanding of the double aspect of *śūnyatā* compare T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, p. 142 N. 1.

[36] Prasannapadā 493.10.

[37] MK. XVIII, 9.

[38] MK. XXIV, 14.

[39] Prasannapadā 495.10 and 11.

[40] At this point the limitations of the vocabulary I am using become embarrassing. Clearly, *saṁvṛti* is not a factual world, *saṁvṛti* is a misunderstanding of, and a wrong way of taking what is properly taken only as *paramārthasatya*.

[41] Which are not predicates in the ordinary sense.

[42] Prasannapadā 495.3 and 4.

[43] A term introduced by Max Scheler in conscious deviation from Kant's formal apriori.

[44] MK. XXV, 9.

[45] Prasannapadā 67.12 to 68.1.

[46] Prasannapadā 495.3 to 5.

[47] MK. XXIV, 18.

BIMAL KRISHNA MATILAL

A CRITIQUE OF THE MĀDHYAMIKA POSITION

I. THE MĀDHYAMIKA POSITION – 'EMPTINESS'

Suppose a man has committed theft. Another man, who does not, in fact, know whether the first man has committed theft or not, comes along and declares that this is the thief simply because he happens to take a dislike to him. Then, a third man, who has actually seen the first man committing theft, comes along to declare that this is the thief. Now, both the second and the third man make the same assertion about what happened in actuality, but yet the difference between them is very significant and important. It is the distinction between a liar and a truthful person, between falsehood and truth – a discrimination about all that matters in Ethics. If we have understood this distinction between the third and the second person, we have then understood something important about a Mādhyamika Buddhist, who declares everything to be empty. This is exactly the way Candrakīrti wanted to explain the distinction between the 'emptiness' doctrine and scepticism, the essential difference between a Mādhyamika and a sceptic.[1]

The above parable, meant to underline the distinction between the 'emptiness' doctrine and scepticism is, in a sense, somewhat superficial and may be even misleading. For it might be argued that the assertion in both the cases is identical and the difference lies merely in what motivated such assertions. Thus, as a report on what is the case, both assertions will enjoy the same 'truth-value'! But this kind of argument only exemplifies how much one can be misled by over-extending the point of a parable. In fact, the usefulness of a parable no longer holds as soon as the relevant point is made. Thus, we have to understand, with great care and caution, the implication of the 'emptiness' doctrine. For it was Nāgārjuna himself who gives the following warning against any misunderstanding of the doctrine: "Like a snake caught at the wrong end, or like a craft learnt in the wrong manner, the 'emptiness' doctrine may destroy the stupid person when it is misunderstood by him!"[2]

The Mādhyamika is critical of all other philosophical systems. He refuses to believe in phenomenal plurality. Thus, his philosophic activity

M. Sprung (ed.), Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta. 54-63.

consists mainly in exposing the unjustifiability, and therefore the unreality, of the pluralistic order envisaged by our common experience and thought. That the pluralistic order of the universe is only a convenient myth and lacks essence or *svabhāva* in the ultimate sense is well expressed by the following Laṅkāvatāra verse:[3]

> Since the essence or 'own-nature' of things, when they are critically examined, cannot be established, such things have been declared (by the Buddha) to be inexpressible and without essence.

The Mādhyamika comes very close to the spirit of the Advaitin with regard to his attitude toward phenomenal plurality. But the Advaitin seems to me to be more committed to a metaphysical absolutism in relation to which he seeks to evaluate ordinary thoughts and experience. The Mādhyamika, however, tries to maintain a non-committal attitude in ontology.

The ultimate truth, according to the Mādhyamika, always eludes our ordinary experience and conceptual thought. But it is admitted to be accessible only to a direct but somewhat mystical experience, a sort of penetrating insight or *prajñā.* If this unlocks the door to mysticism in philosophy, my advice is to tolerate it. 'Mysticism', at least 'cognitive mysticism', need not be, it is argued, treated as a derogatory term. For, as we realize more and more the limits of language in our analytical struggle, the idea of something inexpressible may well dawn in our mind although it would be difficult to make a logical appraisal of this 'inexpressible'.

My point is that proper understanding of the Mādhyamika position ought to produce an incentive to strike a middle course between excessive naïvete and excessive scepticism. The doctrine of 'emptiness', *śūnyatā*, is usually presented as the critique of all views, all philosophical systems. But the implication of this proposition can be misconstrued in two ways: one by the opponent and the other by the so-called proponent. An opponent might think that the Mādhyamika position amounts to nihilism. But this is wrong. A proponent might, on the other hand, think that the Mādhyamika *disproves* all views, all philosophy. But this too, is, in our opinion, wrong. If anything, the Mādhyamika critique is an attempt to show that it is neither proper nor is it strictly justifiable to regard any particular metaphysical system as absolutely valid. Perhaps in the same vein, T. R. V. Murti has remarked:

> The Mādhyamika dialectic is not refutation; ... . Refutation is the rejection of an opponent's view by an interested party having a view of his own to establish. A critique is the disinterested analysis of Reason by itself.[4]

Nāgārjuna makes a significant use of the earlier Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) to prove the 'emptiness' or 'voidness' of everything. The 'proof' has been summed up by Nāgārjuna as follows:[5]

Here the dependent origination of things is what (we call) emptiness. Why? – Because it is devoid of 'essence' (or, 'own-being' *svabhāva*). Those things which are dependently originated have no essential nature (i.e., no being of their own), for they lack their essential nature. Why? – Because they are dependent on causes and conditions (*hetu* and *pratyaya*). For, if things existed through their essential nature ('own-being') then they would have existed (or, come into existence) without caring for their causes and conditions. But they do not originate that way. Therefore, they are devoid of their essential nature, and because they are devoid of essential nature, they are called 'empty' (or, 'void' *śūnya*).

Nāgārjuna puts his thesis succinctly as follows:[6]

Whatever is dependent origination, (is what) we call 'emptiness'. That (again) is (called) dependent designation, (and) That is alone the Middle Way.

Candrakīrti says that Nāgārjuna here establishes the following equation,

Dependent origination = Emptiness = Dependent designation = The Middle Way,

meaning thereby that all these terms in Mādhyamika philosophy refer to the same thing, and are therefore interchangeable.[7]

Candrakīrti further notes that dependent origination is to be understood in this context as the lack of *natural* origination or origination by itself (*svabhāvena anutpādaḥ*). "What lacks origination-by-itself lacks existence or origination or emergence (*astitva*), and having lacked emergence it lacks disappearance or destruction or non-existence (*nāstitva*)."[8] According to Candrakīrti, 'emptiness' is thus intended for the avoidance of the two extremes, existence or production and non-existence or destruction, and in this way 'emptiness' means the Middle Way.

In short, the Mādhyamika position can be interpreted, even at the risk of oversimplification, as exposing a conflict, or rather a contradiction, between two propositions – one of which we seem to assume *a priori* while the other we derive in some sense from experience. The former is: all beings have their own-being, all things have their 'own nature' or 'essential nature' (*svabhāva*). The latter is: all things are dependently originated. The contradiction between these two can be made obvious with a little bit of explanation. The first proposition implies that own-beings or essential natures cannot be created and hence they do not originate (or perish). In other words, own-being is *INDEPENDENT* and *CHANGELESS*. The sec-

ond proposition implies that all things originate (and perish) through dependence on something or other. In other words, all things have *DEPENDENCE* and undergo *CHANGE*. Now to reconcile the conflict between the two, the Mādhyamika concludes: Therefore, everything is devoid of its own nature, everything is empty.

II. TWO TRUTHS (*DVE SATYE*)

Nāgārjuna says:[9]

> The Buddhas teach *dharma* (the doctrine) by resorting to two truths: One is the conventional or provisional truth, the other is the ultimate truth.
>
> Those who do not comprehend the distinction between these two truths
> Do not comprehend the deep significance in the Buddha's teachings.

The conventional is called *saṁvṛti* or *lokasaṁvṛti*. Candrakīrti deliberates over the etymology of the term *saṁvṛti* and suggests three possible meanings: (i) complete covering or the 'screen' of ignorance which hides truth, (ii) existence or origination through dependence, mutual conditioning, (iii) worldly behavior or speech behavior involving designation and designatum, cognition and cognitum.[10] All three meanings reflect three different aspects of what is called *saṁvṛti*, the conventional level.

This doctrine of two truths may not be quite satisfactory to some philosophers. A realist may be rather suspicious of such bifurcation of truths into two levels. Accordingly, this doctrine has been seriously criticized by realistic philosophers like Kumārila, and Bhāsarvajña.[11] But such criticism perhaps misses the mark if we do not take into account the soteriological significance of the doctrine.

The Buddha's teaching of the doctrine (*dharma*) may be seen as a claim to find a path (*mārga*), a means, of release or freedom from life's anxieties and frustrations. The first of his four Noble Truths equated life-experiences with pain and suffering. He was a practical teacher well aware of the problem of expressing the truth in a language that will be appropriate and intelligible to the particular hearer and his mental preparedness. It was only natural that a variety of truth statements made by the Buddha on various occasions will appear to be mutually contradictory. The later Buddhist teachers thus faced the problem of explaining away these contradictions by penetrating into the deeper significance of these sayings. Almost by a stroke of genius, these Buddhist teachers, among whom Nāgārjuna was most remarkable, introduced a level-distinction, in fact, a distinction between two

levels of truth, the conventional (*saṁvṛti*) truth and the ultimate (*paramārtha*) truth.

This exegetical technique of 'level' distinction (distinction of contextual relevance) may not, however, be altogether novel in the Indian tradition as it might appear to be at first sight. A similar method is reflected in Brahminical exegesis of the Vedic scriptures (which combine the ritualistic injunctions of the Vedas and speculative philosophical questions of the Upaniṣads as one whole 'revealed' body of truth). The Brahminical teachers set the injunctive sections in the context of ritualistic action (*karmakāṇḍa*) where the religious goal is 'heaven' or some such limited end. But the speculative thoughts of the Upaniṣads (in which the same rituals are condemned as superficial and selfish acts) are set by the same Brahminical teachers in the context of a higher knowledge (cf. *parā vidyā* and *aparā vidyā*) with a nobler goal. Thus, *jñāna kāṇḍa* is contrasted with *karmakāṇḍa*.

The immediate purpose of the exegetical technique of distinguishing between two levels of truths is to maintain consistency in the whole body of the Buddha's teachings. But, in the context of the religious philosophy of Nāgārjuna, the affirmation of 'two truths' serves a deeper purpose. The teachings of the Buddha, four noble truths, five 'aggregates', eight-fold path etc., are all in this manner treated as practical advice given by a doctor to a sick person in order to get rid of his sickness, rather than as embodying the highest philosophical truth. As another Buddhist parable puts it, when a man is struck by an arrow and bleeding to death it is only practical and proper, at that instant, to pull the arrow out and administer medical care rather than look for the culprit to punish him or even teach the man how to avoid disaster in the future. Thus, the theory of 'dependent origination' or 'emptiness' (or 'essencelessness') which, according to the Mādhyamika, embodies the highest truth in Buddhism, does not ask one to reject any part of the Buddha's teachings, but to embrace all of them. Thus, Nāgārjuna writes:[12]

For whom emptiness 'works', everything 'works' for him.
For whom emptiness does not 'work,' nothing 'works' for him.

He who sees dependent origination, sees all these –
Sufferings, origination, cessation and the path.

Besides all these, the doctrine of 'two truths' makes the *exposition* of the highest truth, emptiness or essencelessness of everything, possible. The ultimate truth is beyond the scope of language. It is, in fact, inexpressible. But only through *INDIRECTION* can the ultimate reality be brought into relation with conventional means of communication. A discourse on 'emptiness'

can be meaningful only in the light of this method of *INDIRECTION*. Herein lies the adequacy of the negative dialectic used by the Mādhyamika in his exposition or discourse, – a method already in use by the Upaniṣadic thinkers to communicate their idea of the highest truth. Thus, it has been said:[13]

> The highest truth cannot be taught without recourse to
> conventional language (*vyavahāra*).
> *Nirvāṇa* (Cessation) cannot be realised, if we do not realise
> the highest truth.

It should be conceded that the phenomenal world is not a mere fiction in the sense the 'son of a barren woman' is a mere fiction. The phenomenal world has a provisional existence. If the phenomenal world were a nonentity, all practical activities would have been impossible, and even ethical and spiritual disciplines would lose their significance. In fact, phenomenal world (and phenomenal experiences) is what should lead us to the realisation of the ultimate truth. The character of the phenomenal world is thus declared to be neither real nor unreal, but logically indeterminable.[14]

III. 'EMPTINESS' AND LOGIC

The Mādhyamika uses philosophic arguments in support of his doctrine of 'emptiness', His 'court of appeal' is what is called *prasaṅga* 'reductio-ad-absurdum' as well as *vyavahāra* 'the common denominator of our phenomenal experience'. A *prasaṅga* type of argument, from which the name Prāsaṅgika is given to the sub-school of Mādhyamika of which Candrakīrti was the chief exponent, can be briefly characterized as follows. It is the argument that moves by extracting contradictory consequences or paradoxical results from the initial proposition or premise. If P is a given proposition assumed to be true by the opponent, a Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika will try to deduce from it such consequences as will be inconsistent with each other or with the original proposition. This may be called the logical absurdities that a position or a given proposition will lead to.

There is another kind of absurdity which a Prāsaṅgika sometimes tries to expose. Sometimes the deduced consequences of a given proposition run counter to our common phenomenal experiences or some tacit assumptions based upon such common experience. This is what I have called the Prāsaṅgika's appeal to *vyavahāra* as opposed to his appeal to logical contradictions or paradoxes. But in either case, the essence of a *prasaṅga* argument lies in the reduction to some absurd consequence.

In Euclidean geometry, a weaker form of reduction is used. In this system there are certain axioms and there are consequences derivable from such axioms. Here the truth of a theorem (*P*) is demonstrated by deducing from its contradictory (not *P*) absurd consequences inconsistent with the said axiom system. But the theorem is held true as long as the axiom system is held true. For the above argument simply proves that the said theorem and the axioms stand and fall together. Either both are true or both are false. But a *prasaṅga* exposes a proposition to be illegitimate because it has absurd corollaries. In short, *prasaṅga* is a sort of weapon in the hand of the Mādhyamika, the proponent of the 'emptiness' doctrine, by which he tries to demolish other philosophical assertions by exhibiting contradictions latent in them.

But although Nāgārjuna uses *prasaṅga* for destroying the opponent's position almost ruthlessly, his approach in philosophy does not seem to be dogmatic. He keeps the door open for arguments, for evidence and persuasion. He thinks that if the opponent can prove that he is wrong and supply evidence he will be glad to accept it. But since the opponent cannot supply evidence in favour of the unchanging *svabhāva* ('essences' or 'own beings') of things, his point remains. But more on this later.

The doctrine of 'emptiness' gives rise to an interesting paradox, a brief discussion and the stipulated solution of which will be instructive in this connection.[15] If all philosophical theories are 'empty' in the sense of being non-final and hence false then the theory of 'emptiness' is also empty and hence false. To put it in another way, if the Mādhyamika negates all philosophical doctrines on the ground of latent contradictions, his own doctrine can be subjected to the same criticism and shown to involve contradiction. This is how the early Naiyāyikas must have criticized Nāgārjuna. He tried to answer such criticisms in his *Vigrahavyāvartanī*.

The Mādhyamika claims that emptiness is the critique of all views of reality, but is not itself another view of reality. It is not a view of reality simply because it cannot be successfully negated or criticized. One simplified way of understanding the Mādhyamika point is as follows: Suppose *X* stands for reality and *P* is a variable for any view, i.e., a philosophic characterization of reality. The 'emptiness' doctrine says that no matter what *P* may be, it cannot be successfully applied to *X* because if *P* is applied to *X* it can be shown by *prasaṅga* that either *not-P* applies to *X*, or that some other absurdity follows. To negate this position successfully one has to show that there *IS* a *P* which applies to *X* without giving rise to absurdities. The Mādhyamika maintains that as long as such a refutation is not forthcoming,

he cannot be persuaded to give up his point. But apart from this philosophic point, the motivation of the Mādhyamika in enunciating the doctrine of 'emptiness' is quite different, as we shall see in the next section.

IV. 'EMPTINESS' AND SOTERIOLOGY

The 'emptiness' doctrine has been propounded in the context of a religious philosophy. Hence we should not lose sight of the soteriological significance of the doctrine. Our ordinary and metaphysical knowledge and our various conceptual formulations are illusory to the extent they are formed with the assumption of an 'essence' or 'own being' (*svabhāva*). This assumption which binds a person to his emotional and conceptual habits is declared as necessarily a wrong assumption, in fact a form of *avidyā* in the context of a religious philosophy that seeks the cessation (*nirodha*) of all worldly sufferings, frustrations and pain, as the highest goal. Just because of this assumption, a man, so the argument goes in this religious philosophy, lives his everyday life in painful awareness of his frustrations. When one seizes something as one's own 'self' or 'soul' or 'essence' and construes some things as existent and other things as non-existent, some things as real and other things as unreal, frustrations due to this false assumption are reinforced all the more and painful mundane existence continues. The 'essencelessness' or 'emptiness' doctrine is supposed to provide the necessary antidote to this painful human existence. It is supposed to administer the change in the attitude necessary for overcoming the delusions about pain and for grasping the highest insight (*prajñā*). It is said to reveal the distinction between the *finality* and *non-finality* of purposes, between the *absolute* and the *relative* goals, between the conventional and the ultimate truths.

It should be noted that the Mādhyamika argument for 'emptiness' by using *prasaṅga* or the negative dialectic seeks to make a positive contribution, to provide an insight into the highest truth. At the same time, it helps to break our mental and emotional attachment to phenomenal realities. In fact, this negative dialectic is complementary to meditational practice to bring home the realization of the ultimate truth.

When the ultimate truth dawns in the mind, the 'emptiness' doctrine does not appear as a separate doctrine or viewpoint. Emptiness is the critique of all views, but itself is not another view. Thus, Nāgārjuna writes:

> If something were non-empty, something would also be empty. But nothing is non-empty, so how will something be empty?

The victorious one (the Buddha) proclaimed the emptiness of all views. But those who take 'emptiness' to be a view, are called 'incurable (persons)'.[16]

Candrakīrti cites another parable in this connection. If a man goes to the shop to buy something, but the shop-keeper tells him, "Look, there is nothing to sell, so I can give you nothing," and if that man says, "All right, then, please give me that *nothing*," it becomes difficult to remove his delusion about buying. In the same manner, if someone thinks 'emptiness' to be a view (*dṛṣṭi*), his delusion is difficult to cure. Candrakīrti goes on to quote a *sūtra* reporting the dialogue between the Buddha and Kāśyapa:[17]

"O Kāśyapa, it is far better to resort to the 'soul' doctrine than to regard 'emptiness' as a view."

"Why so? "

"Emptiness, O Kāśyapa, is the means of breaking away from, or getting out of, (*niḥsaraṇa*) all views. But if someone takes emptiness to be a view, I call him incurable. Suppose, Kāśyapa, someone is sick. The doctor gives some medicinal herb to him. And that medicinal herb, after removing all other 'defects' in the system, does not itself get out of the system. What do you think now, Kāśyapa? Will that man be relieved of sickness? "

"Certainly not, O Honourable one. If that medicinal herb, after removing all defects of the system, does not itself get out of the system, then that man will be even more sick."

The Honourable One said, "In this manner, O Kāśyapa, emptiness is the means of 'getting out' of all views. But if someone takes emptiness to be a view, I call him to be incurable."

Thus, emptiness should, under no condition, be construed as a view (*dṛṣṭi*) or a position. It has the therapeutic value of curing delusions originating from all sorts of views or positions. When all such delusions are cured, emptiness vanishes into non-emptiness, *saṁsāra* vanishes into *nirvāṇa* and vice versa.

To take a position, or accept a point of view, in the undifferentiated totality, is to introduce a false distinction between that position and the rest of the whole. The therapeutics of 'emptiness', negative dialectic and meditation-practice of Buddhism are supposed to bring this point home. As soon as one is home, and totality is revealed, it would be foolish to construe 'emptiness' as a position. Thus, emptiness is the means by which our deepest delusions are purged out of our system whereupon the "emptiness' doctrine resolves itself into the highest wisdom, the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Nāgārjuna describes it by eight Negatives (cancelling one another):[18]

No cessation, no origination; no destruction, no permanence;
no non-differentiation, no differentiation; no coming in,
no going out.

It is said to be the state of perfect equilibrium, where all mutual forces are at rest. It is *śiva*, the state of perfect freedom, joy and bliss.

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NOTES

1 Prasannapadā 368.
2 MK. XXIV 11.
3 Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtra 2/173; 10/167.
4 Murti, T.R.V. *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London 1953.
5 *Vigrahavyāvartanī* (ed. by E.H. Johnston and A. Kunst), *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* IX, 99-152, 1951. Verse 22ff.
6 MK. XXIV 18.
7 Matilal, B.K. *Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis*, Mouton, The Hague/Paris, 1971, p. 148-151.
8 Prasannapadā 504.
9 MK. XXIV 8,9.
10 Prasannapadā 493.
11 B.K. Matilal, *op. cit.*, 152-154.
12 MK. XXIV 14,40.
13 MK. XXIV 10.
14 B.K. Matilal, *op. cit.*, 155-157.
15 *ibid*, p. 158-162.
16 MK. XIII 7,8.
17 Prasannapadā 248, 249.
18 Prasannapadā 3.

SHOTARO IIDA

THE NATURE OF SAMVṚTI AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF PARAMĀRTHA TO IT IN SVĀTANTRIKA-MĀDHYAMIKA

One of the basic religio-philosophical questions for man is: In the ultimate sense, what are the modes and the basis of human existence in regard to the liberation of man? [1]

Among Buddhist thinkers, Bhāvaviveka (ca. 490-560), the founder of the Svātantrika-Mādhyamika, is perhaps the best example of one who qualifies his whole thesis by saying either 'from the standpoint of ultimate reality' (*paramārthatas* or *tattvatas*) or 'from the standpoint of conventional reality' (*saṁvṛtitas*). For example, he makes the following statement in the *Chang-chung-lun*[2] which I translate:

> We also accept the conventional reality which (everybody) in the world unanimously accepts as real. For in worldly experience, origination through causes and conditions is accepted as real. Therefore, (reality) of the conditioned elements, i.e., the eye-(organ), etc., is brought under the category of *saṁvṛtisat* – everybody including shepherds and cowherds knows this. Since we make our assertion from the standpoint of ultimate reality, we never contradict the actual experience of the world.

The scriptural basis for Bhāvaviveka's qualification is the following *āgama* where the discrimination of *satyadvaya* is emphasized:

> The person who can realize buddhahood is "the learned one who is endowed with discrimination (*vibhāga*) [produced] by the insight into the two, i.e., conventional and ultimate [reality]."

I shall attempt to explain the nature of *saṁvṛti* and the relationship of *paramārtha* to it in Svātantrika-Mādhyamika under these headings:

(1) The Sautrāntika-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika.
(2) The nature of *saṁvṛti* in Bhāvaviveka.
(3) The nature of *paramārtha* in Bhāvaviveka.
(4) The relationship of *saṁvṛti* to *paramārtha* in Bhāvaviveka.
(5) Conclusion.

M. Sprung (ed.), Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta. 64-77.

I. THE SAUTRĀNTIKA-SVĀTANTRIKA-MĀDHYAMIKA AND THE YOGĀCĀRA-SVĀTANTRIKA-MĀDHYAMIKA

It was Wassiliew (Wassilij Pawlowitsch, 1818-1900) who distinguished in the Mādhyamika ācāryas two opposing schools – the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika and the Svātantrika-Mādhyamika – on the basis of the *siddhānta* by the first 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa (1648-1721).[3] The second 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa was Dkon-Mchog 'jig-med-dpang-po-ye-shes-brtson' grus-grags-pa'i-sde-dpal-bzang-po (1738-1791).[4] He is known by his short title Kun-mkhen-sku-bar-ba and his short but well-written *siddhānta*, the *Precious Garland* (*Rin-po che'i-phreng-ba*). This work is not included in *A Catalogue of the Tohoku University Collection of Tibetan Works on Buddhism*. However, the text is well known among Tibetans, because it is one of the important introductions to the four principal systems of Buddhist philosophy, i.e., the Vaibhāṣika, the Sautrāntika, the Yogācāra and the Mādhyamika. Thus the work is relatively unknown to the modern scholarly world.[5]

Here, however, a question might be raised: how accurately do these Tibetan *siddhāntas* describe the actual subdivisions of Indian Buddhism? Yamakami Sōgen states his doubts:[6]

> These four probably represented the principal classes of Buddhists who flourished in India at the time when militant Vedāntism was hurling its missiles against the moribund faith of Sugata. The works of the Buddhists so far as I am aware, know of no such fourfold classification. . . .

However, this classification is not entirely without justification, because some Buddhists use it themselves, as in:

(1) *Ye shes snying po kun las bsdus pa shes bya ba'i bshad sbyar* (*Jñānasārasamuccaya*-nāma-nibandhana, Tōhoku, 3852) by post-Śāntarakṣita, Bodhibhadra.

This is a commentary on an authentic Indian Mādhyamika text *Ye shes snying po kun las bsdus pa* (*Jñānasārasamuccaya*, Tōhoku, 3851) falsely ascribed to Āryadeva. As Yamaguchi has shown,[7] these two works, after having summarized the other Indian philosophical systems list the *siddhāntas* of the above four Buddhist schools in sequence.

(2) The *Tarka-Bhāṣya* by Mokṣākāragupta (ca. 1050-1292).[8]

Having published an English translation of this text, Kajiyama notes:

> At the end of the third chapter, our author briefly reproduces the main theories of the four Buddhist schools, Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Yogācārin and Mādhyamika (30-33).

This portion is particularly interesting and important, since we do not have many descriptions of the same kind in other Buddhist texts and since it became a model when Guṇaratna (and probably Mādhava) wrote a summary of Buddhist doctrines in the *Tarkarahasyadīpikā* (and the *Sarva-darśanasaṁgraha*).

Now I describe the Svātantrika-Mādhyamika and its major subdivisions – the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika and the Sautrāntika-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika – according to the Tibetan sources.

(a) The *Precious Garland*[9] by Dkon-mchog-'jig-med-dpang-po.

Why is he called the Svātantrika-Mādhyamika? The reason is: if he rejects own-being in ultimate reality (*paramārthasiddhasvabhāva*) by employing the correct logical marks (*liṅga*), which are established independently [by the] triple characteristic [possessed by the logical mark] (22b-5).[10] If one divides [the Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas], there are two [i.e.,] the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika. Of these two, the Mādhyamika who maintains self-awareness (*svasaṁvedana*) while rejecting the external object, has the characteristic of the first, namely, Ācārya Śāntarakṣita [ca. 725-788], (22b-6).

In other words, as a Mādhyamika, Śāntarakṣita denies *svabhāva* in ultimate reality. However, as a Svātantrika, he retains the notion of *svabhāva* as far as *tathyasaṁvṛtisatya* is concerned. Lastly, as a Yogācāra, he denies the absolute reality of the external world which is taken as independent of our experiencing it. H. Guenther says:

Apart from many other subtleties the Yogācāra-mādhyamika-svātantrikas claimed that the belief in a self was wishfulness and emotivity, setting up all the other emotively toned action and reaction patterns in a human being, while the belief in things other than the self, as existing as such, was intellectual opacity. (Indian Buddhist Thought, etc., p. 84).

In conclusion, Dkon mchog 'jig med dbang po says:

The determination of the three – the basis, the path and the fruit – [of the Sautrāntika-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika] agrees in general with the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika, except for some specific differences. [Here], I say:

Here, I have well explained, without any personal fabrication, all the divisions of the *siddhāntas* of the Svātantrika-[Mādhyamika] school which maintains – [as long as] there is a particular (*svalakṣaṇa*), [that is] not real [in the ultimate sense].

This is to be known as the middle stanza [of this treatise].

(b) *A Classification of [Philosophical] Views (Lta-ba'i-khyad-par) by Ye-shes-sde.*[11]

The foregoing classification is also employed by a ninth century Tibetan translator Ye-shes-sde in his *A Classification of [Philosophical] Views* (Lta-ba'i-khyad-par) as follows:

[A Mādhyamika master Bhāvaviveka] composed his commentary to Ācārya

Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamaka-kārikā,* which was entitled the *Prajñāpradīpa*, as well as [an original work], the *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya-kārikā.* In the interim, [a Mādhyamika] master named Śantarakṣita composed a Mādhyamika treatise called the Madhyamakālaṁkāra-kārikā, adhering to the Yogā (*cārabhūmi*) by Ācārya Asaṅga, whose doctrine was *vijñaptimātra.*[12] Thus, [Śāntarakṣita maintained], – "In conventional reality, [the theory of] *vijñānamātra* is established in accordance with the [Yogācāra-school]. However, in ultimate reality, *vijñāna* also has no own-being." Thus, in the Svātantrika-Mādhyamika school, two slightly different schools came into being. Because of the works of Ācārya Bhavya (Bhāvaviveka) [his school] is called the Sautrāntika-[Svātantrika]-Mādhyamika and because of the works of Śāntarakṣita [his school] is called the Yogācāra-[Svātantrika]-Mādhyamika.

In the above two sources, Bhāvaviveka is classified as a Sautrāntika Svātantrika-Mādhyamika. Here, the Sautrāntika element of his view on *satyadvaya* needs some elucidation.

The Sautrāntika maintains the reality of a conglomerated entity, i.e., 'a jar and water, etc.' in the locus of *saṁvṛtisat*. They admit only the underlying elements of these conglomerated entities as 'real entities' in the locus of *paramārthasat.*

For example, Vasubandhu says in his *Abhidharmakośa,*[13]

[When that thing] is either broken [physically] or negated through intellectual [analysis], the notion (buddhi) of that thing does not [evolve], just like a jar and water – it is *saṁvṛtisat.* Otherwise, it is *paramārthasat.*

Bhāvaviveka's view of the two realities in general is similar to the above. However, there is an important difference: Bhāvaviveka is a Sautrāntika-Mādhyamika. That is to say, as a good Mādhyamika he goes further by claiming, "*rūpa,* etc., are also *saṁvṛtisat* and not *paramārthasat.*" According to Bhāvaviveka, this view is 'the criterion of the *Prajñāpāramitā*' (*prajñāpāramitānaya*) which he takes as 'the proper criterion of Buddhism'. Here is the shift from '*prajñā* to *prajñāpāramitā*' – from 'penetrative insight' to 'perfection of penetrative insight'.

II. THE NATURE OF SAṀVṚTI IN BHĀVAVIVEKA

According to the *Precious Garland*:

If objects of knowledge (*jñeya*) are divided, there are the two, ultimate reality (*paramārthasatya*) and conventional reality (*saṁvṛtisatya*). An object of realization through the way of the disappearance of dual perception and by the validity of direct perception (*pratyakṣapramāṇa*) which realizes its object manifestly is characterized as the former [i.e., ultimate reality]. An object of reality through the way which has dual perception and by the validity of direct perception which realizes its object

manifestly is characterized as the latter [i.e., conventional reality]. For example, the definiendum of the ultimate truth is the emptiness of true existence of a jar and that a jar exists [conventionally] is, for example, the definiendum of the latter (*saṁvṛtisatya*) (23b-3).

In addition to this distinction, the Svātantrika-Mādhyamika further divides conventional reality into two types – real (*tathya*) and erroneous (*mithyā*) conventional reality.

The first (*tathya*) is like water and the second (*mithyā*) is like water in a mirage (*marīci*) (23b-6).

This statement is verified by Bhāvaviveka's following description in his *Prajñāpradīpa*:[14]

All the *dharmas* [are neither born nor do they perish] like *nirvāṇa*. However, this [view] is considered from the ultimate point of view. Many virtuous acts [like giving, etc.] are to be upheld and followed. In social convention also, these [virtues] have real [value]. Therefore, everybody knows that these internal and external entities [like the sense-organs and their objects] are real. [On the other hand, a flower in the sky, a turtle's hair, etc.] are regarded as unreal by everybody. According to the social conventional truth, [Nāgārjuna] says:[15]

Everything is real or unreal.

Bhagavat also declared:[16]

"Whatever is a well-known fact in the world,
I also say that thing exists.
Whatever is not a well-known fact in the world,
I also say that thing does not exist."

Moreover, the sense organs like the eye, etc., and their objects, like *rūpa*, exist without contradicting conventional truth. Therefore, it is declared, "*Everything is real.*" [However], from the ultimate point of view, their own-beings cannot be established like a mirage which arises dependent on [other entities]. Thus, since it does not exist as it appears, when we consider it from the point of view of two truths,

"Everything is both real and unreal."[17]

Thus, Bhāvaviveka divides the world into conventional reality (*saṁvṛtisatya*) and ultimate reality (*paramārthasatya*). He further divides *saṁvṛtisatya* into the real (*tathya*) and the false (*mithyā*). The first is like water and the second is like the water of a mirage. Here, the causal function (*kriyākārasāmarthya*) is the criterion used to determine the real-conventional reality.

However, he does not stop there. He also tries to separate ultimate reality into two kinds; the supra-mundane ultimate reality and mundane ultimate reality. These divisions have capital importance in Bhāvaviveka's system. His points are:

(1) Ultimate reality is uncognizable by the knowledge of other.

(2) However, he maintains that the *paramārtha* exists in the knowledge of the *paramārtha* which is conformable to discrimination (*kalpanānulomikaparamārthajñāna*). This is the kind of ultimate reality which he perceives when he makes the qualification – "from the standpoint of ultimate reality."

Thus, for Bhāvaviveka, mundane reality is limited and has relative efficacy up to a certain point. However, for Candrakīrti the truth is only one, i.e., the *paramārtha* and the *saṁvṛtisatya* is delusion. In regard to the differences between them, Kajiyama gives us the following chart:[18]

Candrakīrti		*Bhāvaviveka*	
paramārtha		aparyāyaparamārtha	paramārtha
		paryāyaparamārtha	
saṁvṛti	lokasaṁvṛti	tathyasaṁvṛti	saṁvṛti
	alokasaṁvṛti	mithyāsaṁvṛti	

The basic question raised within the two schools is the relationship between ultimate and conventional reality, one of the constant questions raised by Buddhist thinkers. Moreover, one man's reality is, sometimes, another man's illusion. Here, while Candrakīrti tends to take 'the either-or' view, i.e., things are either ultimately true or illusive, Bhāvaviveka admits degrees of reality, when he says:

> Also, without the stairs of the *tathyasaṁvṛti*, the ascension to the top of the palace of ultimate reality (*tattva*) is lost. For this very reason, firstly, the *saṁvṛtisatya* should be discerned by the Intelligence. Thence, one proceeds to investigate thoroughly the unique and the universal characteristics of dharmas.[19]

The *tathyasaṁvṛtijñāna* is so called because it corresponds to the direction of the real object (*bhūtārthapravivekānuguṇyatā, MHK,* III-7c-d). It is also called *viśuddhilaukikajñāna* (pure-mundane-knowledge), which can be summarized as follows:

(1) The fulfillment of equipment of [the sextad], i.e., giving, etc., knowledge, and merit (*dānādipuṇyajñānasambhāra*).

(2) The discernment of the relationship between cause (*hetu*) and fruit (*phala*).

(3) The discernment of the universal characteristic (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*), cognized by the inferential knowledge which has discrimination, and the unique particular (*svalakṣaṇa*), the reality-itself (*bhāva-svarūpa*), which should be ascertained by the immediate direct knowledge (*nirvikalpa-*

jñāna). And also discerning of conventional symbol (*saṁketa*), concept (*prajñapti*), mark (*nimitta*), etc.

(4) The knowing of these virtues: the four unlimited (*apramāṇa*), [virtues] i.e., friendliness (*maitrī*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*) and even mindedness (*upekṣā*). The four means of conversion (*saṁgrahavastu*), i.e., giving, (*dāna*), kind words (*priyavāditā*), helpfulness (*arthacaryā*) and consistency between words and deeds (*samānārthatā*).

(5) Likewise, a thorough study of the subjects which are well known in the mundane world, i.e., grammar, palmistry, enumeration, alchemy, medical science, arithmetic, charms, spell, etc.

III. THE NATURE OF PARAMĀRTHA IN BHĀVAVIVEKA

Prior to the discussion on the nature of *paramārthasatya,* it should be noted that Bhāvaviveka clearly qualifies his statement that the view from the standpoint of ultimate reality is possible only in a highly concentrated mind, when he says:

> After [a yogin] generates the concentration of his intelligence, he should investigate, with his insight, these [natures], i.e., solidity, wetness, heat, motion, etc., which are the properties (*vastu*) of earth, water, fire, wind, etc. These dharmas are established by the method of *saṁvṛti* which can be understood by the conventional expression (*vyavahāra*) [of the mundane world].[20] While analyzing with [his] intelligence (*dhī*), [he ponders]:
>
> How is this [possible] from the ultimate point of view?[21] That is: While he is making investigation with his intelligence, he ponders in this manner: are these entities acceptable or not from the ultimate point of view?[22]
>
> If it is acceptable, then this is a *tattva.* Otherwise, that [reason] should be searched for. That is: If the existence of these entities is accepted from the ultimate point of view, then these entities are *paramārthatattva.* If these [entities] are inadequate for examination [from the ultimate point of view], then, the *paramārthatattvas* are other than these [entities]. If so, one should search for that [reason] with the intelligence, without any inclination to [one] side.[23]

Bhāvaviveka, then, goes on to say:

> Here, earth, etc. do not, indeed have the own-being of the gross-elements, from the standpoint of ultimate reality. The reasons: they are created like knowledge, or are 'cause possessing', and so forth.[24]

The argument can be formulated as follows:

(1)	Hypothesis:	*Earth, etc.* (is)	*not own-being-possessing.*
	(pakṣa)	(dharmin)	(dharma)
		from the standpoint of ultimate reality.	

Reason:	(because) *earth, etc.* (is)
(hetu)	(a) 'creation-possessing'
	(b) 'cause-possessing'
Examples:	sa-pakṣa (a) like *knowledge*
	vi-pakṣa (b) (unlike)

(2) Compare this formulation with the standard formulation such as that given by Karl Potter:[25]

Hypothesis:	*That mountain* (is) *fire-possessing.*
Reason:	(Because) *that mountain* (is) *smoke-possessing.*
Examples:	(a) (as in) *kitchen.*
	(b) (unlike) *lake.*

We immediately notice three things.

(a) The standard formulation does not have the qualification *from the standpoint of ultimate reality.*

(b) Bhāvaviveka's argument does not have *vipakṣa.*

(c) The conclusion of every syllogism is an absolute negation (*prasajyapratiṣedha*) and is not a relative negation (*paryudāsapratiṣedha*).

Thus, our familar picture of Bhāvaviveka has been only that of a man of '*priyānumāna* (an adept of inference)', drawn by several scholars, starting from Candrakīrti.

As Edward Conze says:[26]

> We still have no clear idea of Bhāvaviveka's Svātantrika system, which can be studied only in Tibetan translations, and which seems to have upheld the well-nigh incredible thesis that in Mādhyamika logic valid positive statements can be made.

However, this view should be altered after considering Bhāvaviveka's clear distinction between the realm which can be talked about and the realm which cannot be talked about. He insists on the employment of clear and complete reasoning for the realm which can be discussed. Moreover, he insists on the necessity of *śamatha* (calming of mind) prior to the discernment of ultimate reality – he was perhaps also a master of *samādhi.*

He describes the knowledge of ultimate reality as follows:

> In order to show the knowledge of ultimate reality (*paramārthajñāna*), [it is said] : [if] the *prajñā* has the functioning of the complete breakthrough of the net[work] of thought [construction] and has the 'penetration-less-penetration' into the ultimate reality which is free from [the marks of] sameness and multiplicity, immaculate [as] space; wordless, without thought-construction, quiescence which is to be realized alone, [then it is the prajñā] belonging to the ultimate reality.[27]

IV. THE RELATIONSHIP OF TATHYASAMVṚTIJÑĀNA TO PARAMĀRTHA

From the foregoing, we can safely say that Bhāvaviveka takes a progressive view of the degrees of reality and the levels of insight into it. In fact, these progressive steps (*kramas*) form the key concept which describes the relationship of *saṁvṛti* to *paramārtha* in the Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas. Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanā-krama* is an excellent example, as the title of the book indicates.

Bhāvaviveka declares:

[That is:] 'The palace of *tattva*' – the palace of emancipation which pierces [the sky] apart from the three worlds. This is the residence of the omniscient, whose coats of the eyes are completely cleared; constructed by the countless craftsmen of *kuśala*, well decorated by the soaring pillars of the [thirty-seven] wings of enlightenment (*bodhipakṣa*), painted by the white paint of the endless *śukladharma*, illuminated by the light from the moon's countenance of Sugata. The ascension towards this summit is impossible in an entirely sudden way. The reason is: without ascending the stairs of the *tathya-saṁvṛtisatya* for seven countless *kalpas*, the complete perfection of the [six] *pāramitās*, [ten] powers [of a Tathāgata] and [the six] superknowledges (*abhijña*) is impossible. Bhagavat also proclaimed: Apart from the *saṁvṛtidharmas*, it is impossible [for us] to realize the ultimate. For this reason, firstly, the *saṁvṛtisatya* should be discerned by the intelligence.[28]

The above statement, then, suggests that the Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas maintain that liberation can be gained progressively by action, meditation, and insight. They do not claim liberation by a sudden leap of insight. In fact, they claim 'creeping before leaping'. Therefore, as far as the Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas are concerned, they are not 'leap philosophers', as Potter calls the Mādhyamikas, but indeed, 'progress philosophers'. This is one of the reasons why Potter rightly suggests:

The Svātantrika position suggests the possibility of a midway position between Yogācāra or Buddhist logic and Mādhyamika. And this was apparently attempted by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla... .[29]

Lastly, a comment can be made on the nature of Bhāvaviveka's qualification, mentioned earlier – *saṁvṛtitas* or *paramārthatas*. Nāgārjuna does not qualify, in his Madhyamaka-kārikās, his statement either by *paramārthatas* or *saṁvṛtitas*, although there are the celebrated passages concerning *satyadvaya* which are as follows:

The Buddhas' Dharma-explanation relies on two truths: the wordly, conventional truth, and the absolute truth. Those who do not know the distinction between these

two truths do not know the deep reality in the Buddha's teaching. Without reliance on the expressional [truth], the absolute is not taught; without arriving at the absolute, nirvāṇa is not reached.[30]

Here, only mutual dependency of conventional truth and ultimate truth, one expressible and the other inexpressible, is mentioned. However, as Tsong-kha-pa says:

There are many instances [in the Mādhyamika literature] where the qualifications like *paramārtha-[tas]*, *satya*, are placed to the things to be negated. If not, there are many instances where there are qualifications such as – it cannot be established from the viewpoint of *svabhāva, svarūpa,* and *svalakṣaṇa.*

Thus, the discrimination of the two realities (*satyadvayavibhāga*) is not a new invention of Bhāvaviveka, but a continued thought in the Buddhist *sūtras* and *śāstras.* He only capitalized on this distinction as a key criterion of his system. For this reason, Bhāvaviveka may be called a 'point of view philosopher'. His point of view is – "if only you would try to understand the point of view Nāgārjuna is taking, you would not find his statements like, '*Everything is both real and unreal*' so incomprehensible – he is taking the *satyadvaya* point of view." Nāgārjuna is, also, it seems to me, saying "If only you would try to understand the point of view the Buddha is taking, you would not find his teaching of *śūnyatā* so incomprehensible – he is taking the *satyadvaya* point of view." Here, the Buddha, Nāgārjuna and Bhāvaviveka are adopting and sharing the same presuppositions, criteria, goals, and judgments of real and unreal.

However, such uses of the expression 'point of view' lead, in turn one to ask "what is it to take such a point of view?"[32]

It seems to me, then, the following difficulty would arise. Practically speaking any point of view might conceivably be relevant in some way in any instance. This leads to anarchy of points of view, because it is impossible to fix a criterion which distinguishes relevance and irrelevance among these points of views. If there is no fixed criterion, then, how can one best decide which, among alternative points of view, one is justified in taking? The ultimate answer might be circular, because a point of view requires another point of view – ad infinitum.

V. CONCLUSION

The Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas admit degrees of reality and levels of insight into the reality dependent on spiritual maturity and degrees of *samādhi.* Thus, Bhāvaviveka describes how ultimate reality looks to someone who is

in the process of *samādhi.* Although we are not in a position to decide whether or not Bhāvaviveka had an actual experience about *paramārtha,* the following conclusions on the nature of *saṁvṛti* and the relationship of *paramārthas* to it are certain:

(a) No one denies the fact that there are the limited values in *saṁvṛti.* For example, when contrasted with a mirage of water, a flower in the sky or the hair of a turtle (*mithyā saṁvṛti*), the four elements have their inherent efficacies: earth, which is the solid energy, sustains things in space; water, the wet energy, consolidates; fire the heat energy, transforms things; and wind, the mobile energy expands.

(b) However, all serious inquiry starts from re-examination of conventional reality (*saṁvṛtisat*). For example, in ultimate reality, the above elements lose their rigid own-beings (identities), for they are only conventional designations from the point of view of ultimate reality.

(c) This absence of own-being (*niḥsvabhāvaśūnyatā*) can be proven by correct application of speculative reasoning (*tarka*). Bhāvaviveka's meaning is similar to the statement, "Everything that can be thought at all can be thought clearly. Everything that can be put into words can be put clearly."[33]

However, this is the realm of mundane-ultimate-reality which is knowable by non-conceptual knowledge (*nirvikalpajñāna*) i.e., the teaching of non-production (*anutpatti*) which is acquired by listening, by thinking and by creative contemplation (*bhāvanā*). However, this is not *paramārtha* itself. *Paramārtha* is accessible only to the highly trained introspective individual in whom the flame of reasoning (*tarkajvālā*) is consummated.

Wittgenstein also says:[34]

> There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest.* They are what is mystical.

Prajñā, then, is born, like the new phoenix from the ashes of *tarkajvālā,* as Bhāvaviveka puts it: "Words stop here; this is not a domain of thought. Conception turns back and the silence of knowledge is born."[35]

In other words – "Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen."[36]

Perhaps.

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NOTES

[1] In regard to the term *ultimate*, see Hideo Kishimoto's article, 'An Operational Definition of Religion', *Numen* VIII (1961), 236-240.

[2] Taishō 30, 268c, 8-12, Skt. and Tib.: Nil. Chin.: *Chang-chung-lun*; see Louis de la Vallée Poussin, *Le Joyau dans la main*, MCB, 2 (1932-1933), 68-138. Śāstri, N. Aiyaswami, Karatalaratna, "*Vishava-Bharati Annals*", 2 (Santiniketan, 1949), 33-99.

[3] This date is given by Lokesh Chandra on the basis of a short lifesketch prepared by "Academician Dr. Rincen of Ulanbator". See Lokesh Chandra *Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature*, pt. 1 (Sata-piṭaka series 28), New Delhi, 1963, 45-46. Also see Gunther Schulemann, *Geschichte der Dalai-Lamas*, (Leipzig 1958), pp. 288-289. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 260, n. 234.

[4] Lokesh Chandra, *op. cit.*, p. 49-50. See also G.N. de Roerich, 'The Author of the Hor chos 'byung',' *JRAS* (1946), 194.

[5] Until H.V. Guenther mentioned this work in 'Indian Buddhist Thought in Tibetan Perspective', *History of Religion* (Journal) 3, 1 (1963), 84, n. 3; 105, n. 43, Kohō Hashimoto was the only scholar who made a brief statement in his *Mōko no Ramakyō*, (Lamaism of Mongolia), (Tōky; Bukkyo Kōronsha, 1942), p. 235. The composition of a new *siddhānta* is still kept alive among Tibetan lamas. For example, my Tibetan teacher Ser smad lha mkhar yongs 'dzin lha ram dge bshes bstan pa rgyal mtshan, a part-time lecturer at Delhi University in 1965, produced an extensive work entitled, *Grub mtha 'i rnam gzhag blo gsal thar 'dod 'jug ngos zhes bya* (A Determination (*vyavasthāna*) of siddhānta, called a ford [to those who] desire liberation by clear [intelligence]). This 'ford' is, as far as I am aware of, the newest version of Tibetan *siddhānta* literature.

[6] Yamakami, Sōgen: *Systems of Buddhist Thought*, The University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1912.

[7] Yamaguchi, Susumu: *Chūgan Bukkyō Ronkō*, (Discussion of Mādhyamika Buddhism), Kōbundō, Kyōto, 1944, pp. 261-351.

[8] Kajiyama, Yūichi: *An Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy* (*an annotated translation of the Tarkabhāṣā* of Mokṣākāragupta). Memoirs of the Faculty of Letters, Kyōto University, No. 10.

[9] Our manuscript is a xylograph from the uncatalogued Lessing collection of the rare book section of the University of Wisconsin Library. Some terms in this section were adopted from Obermiller's, 'The Doctrine of Prajñā-paramitā, etc.', *Acta Orientalia* 11 (1933), 1-131, 334-354.

[10] For the Svātantrika-Mādhyamika, nothing can stand by itself in the locus of *paramārtha*. They try to prove this thesis by a logical mark or probans which has three necessary conditions (tshul gsum rang ngos grub pa'i rtags yan dag) which is set forth by *Dignāga*. They are:

(1) *pakṣadharmatva*: That is to say, the correct *liṅga* should be a *dharma* of *pakṣa*, i.e., smoke (*dharma*) should come from that mountain (*dharmin*) not from somewhere else.

(2) *sapakṣe sattva*: The correct *liṅga* must be in the positive example (*sapakṣa*), either in full or in part, i.e., as in the case of fire in a kitchen.

(3) *vipakṣe 'sattva'*. The correct *liṅga* must be completely excluded from the negative example (*vipakṣa*) as in the case of fire in a lake.

See Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic* 2, 109, 120; Potter, *Presuppositions*, pp. 56-74; Kitagawa, *Indo koten ronrigaku*, pp. 126-150; Kajiyama, *Tarkabhāṣā*, 10, 66c.

[11] Ye-shes-sde's works were popular in Tunhuang area in the beginning of the ninth century, since 'Go chos grub quotes the *Lta-ba'i-khyad-par*. Ye-shes-sde played an important role in the virorous translating activities which took place in the latter half of the eighth century Tibet. He was always in touch with the newly invited Indian Buddhist scholars like Jinamitra, Dānasīla, Surendrabodhi, etc. Therefore, Ye-shes-sde's statements about the subdivisions of Indian Buddhism are highly dependable. [See Ueyama, Daishun, 'A Study on the Life and Works of Fa-ch'eng (Hgo chos grub), a translator of the Buddhist Texts at Tunhuang under the Tibetan Rule. Part II' (In Japanese). The Tōhō Gakuhō, Kyōto, Number 39, March, 1968, pp. 193-202.]

[12] Usual translation of this term is 'conscious-only' or 'mind-only' (citta-mātra). The Vijñānavāda, then, is labelled 'the Subjective Idealism'. Thus, if one understands that a consciousness or subconscious nature is projecting the external world, then it cannot be the whole truth. For a discussion of this subject, see Alex Wayman's Review Article, 'The Yogācāra Idealism', *PEW* XV, No. 1, 65-73. Guenther also says, "The so-called *only mind* (sems-tsam, Skt. cittamātra) thesis means that there must be a mind to experience and know things and that things in order to be known must appear before a mind. Appearance, however, does not commit us to much. It does not commit us to the belief that it is mental, nor yet that it is physical." See Guenther, 'Indian Buddhist Thought, etc.', p. 84 and note 2.

[13] yatra bhinne na tad buddhir anyā 'pohe dhiyā ca tat ghaṭa 'mbuvat saṁvṛtisat paramārthasad anyathā

Gokhale, V.V.: 'The Text of the Abhidharmakośakārikā of Vasubandhu', *JRAS* (Bombay Branch), NS. Vol. 22 (1947), 73-102.

[14] Tib.: *Dbu ma 'i rtsa ba 'i 'grel pa shes rab sgron ma, (Prajñāpradīpamūla-madhyamaka-vṛtti)*. Tōhoku 3853, translated by Dīpaṁkaraśrījña and Tshul-rgyal-ba, in the monastery of Ra sa 'phral snang in Lhasa.

Skt.: Nil. Chin.: *Pan-jo-teng-lun*, T. 1566, translated by Po-lo-p'o-chia-lo-mi-tiu-li (Prabhākaramitra) at Sheng-kuang-szu in Ch'ang-an 630-632 A.D.

Chin. to Jap.: Hadani, Ryotai, *Kokuyaku Issaikyō*, Chūganbu 2, Daitō Shuppansha, Tōkyō, 1930.

Tib. ed.: Walleser, Max, *Prajñāpradīpa* (incomplete), Bibliotheca Indica, New Series, 1396, Calcutta, 1914.

Tib. to Ger.: Kajiyama, Yūichi, 'Bhāvaviveka's Prajñāpradīpah (1. Kapitel)', *WZKSO* 7 (1963), 37-62; *WZKSO* 8 (1964), 100-130.

Tib. to Jap.: 'Chie no Tomoshibi' (The lamp of wisdom), *Daijō Butten* (The Mahāyāna Buddhist texts), pp. 287-328. This is a complete and annotated translation of Chapter Eighteen of the Prajñāpradīpa, Ichigo, Masamichi, 'Chūganha to Suronha to no Tairon' (Mādhyamika's criticism of the soul-theory of Sāṁkhya as found in Prajñāpradīpa, XVIII), *IBK* XV, No. 2, (1967). Ichigo, Masamichi, 'Chūganha to Katsuron Shōrigakuku to no Tairon' (Mādhyamika's criticism of [the ātman] of the Vaiśesika and the Naiyāyika), Tohogaku, No. 34, pp. 95-76.

[15] MK. XVIII, 8a.

[16] Prasannapadā 370.6.

[17] MK. XVIII, 8b.

[18] Kajiyama, Yuichi: "Bhāvaviveka and the Prāsaṅgika School", The Nava-Nālandā-Mahāvihāra Research Publication, Vol. I, Nālandā, 1957.

[19] MHK. III-12

(ta)ttvaprāsādaśikharārohanaṁ ca viyujyate tathyasaṁvṛtisopānam antarena
yataṣ tataḥ pūrvaṁ saṁvṛtisatyena praviviktaṁ matir bhavet tato
dharmasvasāmānyalakṣaṇe suviniścitaḥ

Ms. na.

I would like to acknowledge the opportunity for eighteen months' study in India during 1965-1966 as a Research Fellow of the American Institute of Indian Studies. During my sojourn in India, I met Professor V.V. Gokhale, then the head of the Department of Buddhist Studies at Delhi University. I am indebted to him because he not only allowed me to attend his seminar on Bhāvaviveka, but also permitted me to reproduce a copy of a rapid handcopy of the Sanskrit manuscript of the *Madhyamakahṛdayakārika* (Chapter III), prepared by Paṇḍita Rāhula Saṃkṛtyāyana.

[20] Tōkyō-Kyōto Tibetan Tripiṭaka 96, 27, 1-1.

[21] MHK, III-22a-b

vicaryamāṇās tu dhiyā kim ayam paramārthataḥ

[22] Tōkyō-Kyōto Tibetan Tripiṭaka, 96, 27, 1-3.

[23] Tōkyō-Kyōto Tibetan Tripiṭaka 96, 27, 1-4.

[24] MHK, III-26.

tatra [bhūtasvabhāvaṁ hi] norvyādi[r] paramārthataḥ kṛtakatvād yathājñānaṁ
hetumat vādito 'pi vā

[25] Potter, Karl H.: *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963, p. 60.

[26] Conze, Edward: *Buddhist Thought in India*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1962, pp. 238-239.

[27] MHK, III-10

aśeṣakalpanājālapratiṣedhavidhāyinī śāntapratyātmasaṁvedyanirvikalpanirakṣare

MHK, III-11.

vigataikatvanānātve tat[t]ve gagananirmale apracārapracārā ca prajñā syāt
pāramārthikī

[28] Tōkyō-Kyōto Tibetan Tripiṭaka, 96, 26, 1-7.

[29] Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

[30] MK. XXIV, 8-10. Translation by Robinson, Early *Mādhyamika*, pp. 48-49.

[31] Tōkyō-Kyōto Tibetan Tripiṭaka 152, 150, 4-2.

[32] Cf. Moline, Jon: 'On points of View', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 5, *No.* 3 (July 1968), 191-198.

[33] Wittgenstein, Ludwig: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, No. 4, 116.

[34] *Ibid.*, No. 6-522.

[35] MHK, III, 277.

atro vāco nivartante cittāsyāyam agocaraḥ nivartta[te ca] saṁkalpo
jñānamaunaṁ ca jāyate

[36] Wittgenstein, *op. cit.*, No. 7.

A. K. WARDER

IS NĀGĀRJUNA A MAHĀYĀNIST?

This paper is intended as a contribution to the understanding of Nāgārjuna. In particular, it proposes to set aside certain assumptions of the commentators and many modern students regarding the interpretation of his statements. Should these assumptions turn out to be justified, well and good, but so far the necessary evidence has not been adduced. The later Mahāyāna schools claim him as their own, that is all. That claim ought to be investigated before we read their views into Nāgārjuna's words. Our aim must be first to try to understand Nāgārjuna in his own words, not in those of Candrakīrti or anyone else. This aim does not imply any lack of admiration for Candrakīrti, but merely a belief that philosophy did not stand still for four centuries and that the later philosopher might be more independent than is sometimes supposed. No school is ever faithful to its real or supposed founder. The mere fact of conforming to a school, whereas the founder was nothing if not original, excludes the possibility of an identity of outlook between the founder and those who later try to follow him. It is this which makes 'Buddhism' itself, as a 'system', impossible. There can be a philosophy of the Buddha, if we can find out what it was, but how can there be a philosophy of 'Buddhists' which remains identical with it? But we must not here pursue this question: the only point to retain here is that unwarranted assumptions concerning Nāgārjuna should be set aside.

Before proceeding with our question we have obviously to describe 'Nāgārjuna', since there were several writers of that name. The best description for the particular Nāgārjuna we are now interested in appears to be: 'The author of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*'.[1] There are of course other texts believed to be by the same Nāgārjuna. The present writer thinks it probable that the following works are his: *Vigrahavyāvartanī, Śūnyatāsaptati, Yuktiṣaṣṭikā, Vaidalyasūtra* and *Prakaraṇa*. The identity of authorship is attested by Tibetan tradition and supported by the apparent agreement of views between these texts. The tradition is less certain about a group of works of a somewhat different character: *Suhṛllekha, Ratnāvalī* and a number of *stotras* (the collection called *Catuḥstava*). These are not in principle philosophical treatises like the others, but sometimes make refer-

M. Sprung (ed.), Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta. 78-88.

ence to philosophy. The *Suhṛllekha* recommends the King to whom it is addressed (Sātavāhana) to emulate the *Bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara and the *Buddha* Amitābha in looking after the happiness of the world he rules and ultimately becoming a *buddha.* This is Mahāyānist and suggests as source the *Amitābhavyūha* or *Sukhāvatīvyūha,* one of the earliest Mahāyāna *sūtras.* Otherwise this epistle expounds simply the old moral and social teaching of the early Buddhist schools. The *Ratnāvalī Rājaparikathā* is likewise addressed to a King (Sātavāhana again according to the commentator Ajitamitra). It goes beyond the old ethical teaching and advice on government into philosophical analysis of the idea of a self, etc., and also into a Madhyamaka type of critique of the concept of a 'cause' and so on. In its fourth chapter it defends and names the Mahāyāna. The *Catuḥstava* embody Madhyamaka language (e.g. *Paramārthastava* 11) and there is a clear reference to Mahāyāna ideas at *Niraupamyastava* 22: the Buddha is said to be 'permanent' (*nitya*) and to demonstrate cessation, i.e. attaining *nirvāṇa,* only for teaching purposes (cf. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka,* Chapter XV). If any of these works are by the Nāgārjuna with whom we are now concerned, our question is answered. The present writer thinks it quite likely that they are in fact his, nevertheless this has not been established beyond doubt and we ought not to assume it. The MK is a far longer text than any of these: should it not be taken as self-sufficient? Should we not ask what its outlook is before relating it to other texts not certainly by the same author? As to yet other works not mentioned above, the present writer thinks it very unlikely that any of them are by the author of MK.

The MK nowhere mentions Mahāyāna nor does it appear to make reference to any Mahāyāna *sūtra* (canonical text), either by name or by quoting. On the other hand it does refer, in both these ways, to *sūtras* found in the *Tripiṭaka* as accepted by the early schools. Nāgārjuna's sources here can be found in the Pali Canon, which happens to be preserved intact, and also in the Sanskrit and Chinese versions of the early *Tripiṭaka* which are partially preserved. Among the *sūtra* collections he shows a distinct preference for the *Saṁyukta.*[2]

The only *sūtra* actually named in MK is the *Kātyāyanāvavāda.*[3] Candrakīrti, incidentally, says[4] that this is found in all Nikāyas, i.e. schools of Buddhism or recensions of the *Tripiṭaka*. Nāgārjuna here quotes from the *sūtra* the key words, saying that the Master avoids both the extremes 'it exists' *asti* and 'it does not exist' *nāsti* (writing in verse kārikās, Nāgārjuna cannot reproduce the exact wording of the original prose *sūtras* in extenso).

Nāgārjuna quotes in a similar manner, but without naming the *sūtra*,

from the *Acelakāśyapa*.[5] The key words here are that unhappiness, *duḥkha*, is made by oneself, *svayaṃ kṛta*, or made by another, *parakṛta*, or made by the two together or is without a cause, four positions which are rejected in the *Tripiṭaka* and by Nāgārjuna in favour of conditioned origination.

Nāgārjuna further quotes from the *Anavarāgra Saṃyukta*.[6] This is a little fuller, quoting phrases as well as words: 'The former point (origin) is not discerned. . . transmigration is beginningless. . .' (*pūrvā prajñāyate koṭir na. . . saṃsāro 'navarāgraḥ*. . . .)

The quotation 'That is false which has the nature of falsity' (*tan mṛṣā moṣadharma*) or 'which has the nature of perishing' as the Sthaviravāda Commentary interprets, appears to come from the *Dhātuvibhaṅga Sūtra* in the *Madhyama*.[7] Candrakīrti in explaining this *kārikā*[8] quotes the *sūtra* more fully, adding the words '...true which has the nature of non-falsity, extinction' *satyaṃ yad idam amoṣadharma, nirvāṇam*, a phrase which is found in the *Madhyama* with Nāgārjuna's. In the Pali text, what is false is described only as sensation, *vedanā*, or all unhappiness, (*duḥkha*). Nāgārjuna in his *kārikā* extends this to all forces (*saṃskāras*), which Candrakīrti also gives as if part of the *sūtra*. This would seem to be a logical implication of the contrast with extinction, but that depends on the precise interpretation. In any case it appears probable that Nāgārjuna was following some version of this *sūtra* here.

In rejecting the opinions (*dṛṣṭis*) of speculation Nāgārjuna clearly follows some version of the *Brahmajāla Sūtra*.[9] Some of the key terms of this scheme of opinions are set out by Nāgārjuna from the *sūtra*: those who imagine things concerning the 'former end' (*pūrvānta*) suppose the universe (*loka*) to be eternal (*śāśvata*), etc.; those who speculate about the 'after end' (*aparānta*) are concerned about whether or not they will survive in a future life, whether the 'soul' (*ātman*) will survive or there will be 'annihilation' (*uccheda*); returning to the 'universe' again the question is raised whether it is 'finite' (*antavant*), etc.

Besides these and other clear references at particular points to individual *sūtras* of the old *Tripiṭaka*, however, Nāgārjuna's work as a whole assumes, as the doctrine of the Buddha which he is upholding, the most prominent and frequently repeated statements of that *Tripiṭaka*, which we can reconstruct to a considerable extent by comparing the available texts in Pali, Chinese and Sanskrit. The doctrine of the Buddha, according to Nāgārjuna, consists essentially of the Four Truths and Conditioned Origination.[10] There are no terms peculiar to the Mahāyāna. There is no evidence that Nāgārjuna had ever seen any *Prajñāpāramitā* text (except for the later

Mahāyānist legends of his visit to the Dragon World and so on). For him the most important canonical text is the *Nidāna Saṁyukta*.

The *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* are a critique. If Nāgārjuna is in part explaining a body of texts which he had before him, and which from our preceding investigation appears to have been some recension of the early *Tripiṭaka*, he is much more conspicuously criticising views with which he does not agree. What are these views he is attacking? There are of course his general critiques of philosophical concepts and certain types of proposition, which can be seen as a continuation as well as an interpretation of the critiques he found in the *Tripiṭaka* itself, some of which we have just noticed ('soul', 'universe', 'eternal', 'finite', 'self', 'other' and the like). Here he offers critiques of the concepts 'time', 'space', 'motion', 'causality', 'characteristic', 'agent' and others. But he also appears at times to be attacking some kinds of Buddhistic concepts. In places his opponents, whose views he quotes (as in MK XXIV, but also in many other places), are evidently Buddhists of some kind. Modern students have sometimes supposed that he is criticizing early Buddhism, or the early schools, in order to set up Mahāyāna instead. Is there any truth in this supposition? We have already pointed out that there is nothing overtly Mahāyānist in the MK. Even in its deeper implications there seems to be nothing distinctively Mahāyānist in this reading of the *Nidāna Saṁyukta*. It is not early Buddhism which is being attacked, for the *Tripiṭaka* is quoted with respect as the words of the Buddha or the Master, treated as true statements and then applied to the criticism of various opponents. But within the manifold tradition of Buddhism it is possible to identify two major targets.

The first of these can be found among the systematizations of the *Abhidharmas* of various schools of Buddhism. The *Abhidharma* is of course the third *piṭaka* constituting the *Tripiṭaka* itself, but, as available, we find wide divergencies among the *Abhidharmas* extant belonging to different schools. There is a common kernel, as well as external indications of what the original common *Abhidharma* contained, but the texts preserved represent the results of systematisation after the division of the early Buddhists into several schools. There is no need to discuss the question of an original *Abhidharma* here.[11] What Nāgārjuna is attacking is not *Abhidharma* as such but the systems and methods of certain schools, some of which are known to us from texts still available. Whereas the original purpose of *Abhidharma* was to provide a convenient synopsis of the *Dharma*, which in the *sūtras* is embedded and scattered in narratives and dialogues, the texts of certain schools, such as the Sthaviravāda and Sarvāstivāda, go far beyond

the statements of the *sūtras*. These texts emphasise the analysis of everything into *dharmas*, elements or elementary qualities of experience, following up certain implications in some of the *sūtras* but going far beyond the *sūtra* analysis. If this analysis is systematised and made complete and comprehensive, we get a description of the whole experience, or of the whole of 'transmigration' (what one would loosely translate as the 'universe'), as composed of a finite number of *dharmas*, whose nature is then the subject of further discussion. According to the Sthaviravāda, for example, these *dharmas* are ultimately real (*paramārtha*), whereas other things we suppose we experience are merely conceptual, such as the concept of a 'person' (*pudgala*).[12] From this, elaborate commentarial discussions developed, summarised in *Mohavicchedanī*.[13]

It was the Sarvastivādins who pressed furthest the idea that the *dharmas* were ultimately real. Their school derived its name from the notion that all the *dharmas* 'exist' (*asti*), even in the past and future (see particularly the first section of the *Vijñānakāya*, refutation of the Sthaviravāda). Nāgārjuna in MK is much preoccupied with this idea of the 'existence' of *dharmas* and presumably the Sarvāstivāda and its *Abhidharma*, with this peculiar doctrine, constitute his primary target wherever the idea is in question. For him, 'exists' implies 'always exists', which is the eternalist opinion.[14] If objects are assumed to exist, it is inconsistent, logically 'not congruent' (*na yujyate*), to say that they have conditions, i.e. it is inconsistent with conditioned origination.[15] 'What is conditioned by something is not identical with it nor different from it, that is why there is nothing which is annihilated or which is eternal.'[16] Comparing MK I and XXIV, we see that it can be said that *dharmas* 'occur', 'originate', 'cease', provided that this is understood only of 'empty' *dharmas*, not of 'existing' *dharmas*, i.e. what are called *bhāvas*, 'existings', 'existents'. This last term derives from a late phase of *Abhidharma* type discussion, as in the Sthaviravāda commentary *Aṭṭhasālinī*,[17] as an explanation of *dharma*. (A *dharma* is an existent; what is not a *dharma* is inexistent, *abhāva*.)

The second major target represents a further stage of *Abhidharma* discussion. In the Sthaviravāda tradition it is not found in the *Abhidharma* itself but in the post-canonical *Peṭakopadesa* and in the commentaries. This is the theory of the 'own-nature' *svabhāva*, invented in order to define and describe the *dharmas*. The 'own-nature' is also found in the Sarvastivāda tradition, though it is not so conspicuous there. In the *Peṭakopadesa* (1st century B.C.?) we find a discussion on cause (*hetu*) and condition (*paccaya*) with reference to the *dharmas*.[18] The cause is the 'own-nature', the condition is

the 'other-nature' (*parabhāva*). The cause is 'internal' (*ajjhattika*), the condition 'external' (*bāhira*). We understand from this that the 'own-nature' is the *dharma* in the previous moment of its own series of momentary occurrences, whilst the 'other-nature' is some other *dharma* acting on it from outside. This 'own-nature' doctrine was stabilised in the Sthaviravāda commentaries, probably some time before A.D. 100[19], appearing in the standard Pali version of Buddhaghosa. The 'other-nature' idea seems not to have been pursued further. In Buddhaghosa's *Aṭṭhasālinī* on the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* we find the fundamental definition: '*dharmas* are what have their own own-nature' (*attano pana sabhāvan dhārentī ti dhammā*).[20] This evidently means that *dharmas* are to be defined, and identified in experience, as elementary qualities not analysable into anything else. It is, however, added that the *dharmas* 'naturally' (*yathāsvabhāvatas*) have this own-nature 'through conditions'. We may render this freely as that it is their nature to have conditions. It looks as if the 'other-nature' has been incorporated into the 'own-nature' in order to avoid the dilemma. The possibility cannot be excluded that this was a last minute modification of Sthaviravāda doctrine in an attempt to meet the critique of Nāgārjuna. In any case the 'own-nature' concept of the *Peṭakopadesa*, and of the commentarial tradition at some stage, offered a splendid target for Nāgārjuna, closely related to the other scholastic trends he objected to (*bhāva* < *svabhāva*, 'being' deduced from 'own-being'). In MK XV he offers his critique of the 'own-nature', which in fact constitutes the basis of his entire work and is the best chapter for students to read first. If an 'own-nature' were related to causes and conditions it would be artificial (*kṛtaka*). This would contradict the conception of its 'own' nature, which by definition should be independent of anything else (*nirapekṣa*). If there is no 'own-nature' then there can be no 'other-nature' either, since this could be understood only by contrast with 'own-nature'. In the absence of either 'own-nature' or 'other-nature' how can there be any 'nature' *bhāva* (being, existent)? If 'nature' (existent) is denied, then 'no nature' (*abhāva*) (inexistent) also cannot be affirmed, for 'no nature' is only the otherwise nature (*anyathābhāva*) of 'nature'. Those who see 'own-nature' and 'other-nature', 'nature' and 'no nature', do not see the reality (*tattva*) of the doctrine of the Buddha... . Nāgārjuna then quotes the *Kātyāyanāvavāda Sūtra* as we have noted above. The critique clarified here is applied in MK I and elsewhere and leads to Nāgārjuna's main statement of what he sees as the doctrine of the Buddha in MK XXIV. "If because of the 'own-nature' you see (envisage) an 'existing nature' *sadbhāva* of 'natures' *bhāvas*, then you must see these 'natures' as without causes and conditions.

You must reject cause and effect (causality), agent, instrument and action, origination and cessation and any result. It is conditioned origination which we call 'emptiness'. It is a 'concept based on' (*upādāya prajñapti*) something else (i.e. not itself the reality), and precisely it is the intermediate way."[21] All this, of course, in the context of 'emptiness', of the origination and cessation, etc., of 'empty' *dharmas*, not of 'existents'.

From all this it seems clear that Nāgārjuna accepts the *Tripiṭaka*, in an ancient form recognised probably by all schools of Buddhists as the teaching of the Buddha, but attacks what he sees as misinterpretations of it by the scholastic traditions of the schools. He professes to be simply restoring the original meaning of the old *sūtras*, showing that the innovations of the schools lead to contradictions and in particular conflict with what he takes to be the essential teaching, namely conditioned origination. This is hardly going over to the new Mahāyāna movement, with its new *sutras* designed to replace the old ones because they alone contain the definitive or ultimate teaching, but instead a return to the original sources. If Nāgārjuna really had any sympathies with the Mahāyānists, he was certainly against that complete break with early Buddhism which many Mahāyāna *sūtras* advocate. If he had such sympathies, we must conclude that his aim was to prevent a break, to reunite all Buddhists on the basis of the texts which all accepted, to restore the original Buddhism.

In conclusion, we may attempt to answer the question whether Nāgārjuna's claim to be restoring the original meaning and interpretation of the old *sūtras* is justified, or whether the available traditions of the Sthaviravāda commentaries, and what little we know of the interpretations of other early schools, are more faithful. Of all the schools, the Sthaviravāda purports to be the most conservative in rejecting any innovations in the doctrine of the Buddha. Is it possible to determine the outlook of the old *sūtras* themselves, independently of either interpretation and divested of all accretions in the traditions of the schools, and then see which interpretation is closer to it?

Within the scope of this paper it is obviously not possible to set out the old texts and discuss their interpretation in detail. We must be content here to refer to a previous publication which attempted to define the position of original Buddhism, among the schools of Indian philosophy in the Buddha's time, and to add a few clarifications from research done since then.[22] The general drift of that article was that Buddhism, like some other teachings of its day, reflected the current advances in science and opposed to all traditional authority (especially Vedism or Brahmanism) truths discovered in

experience and verifiable by anyone. This may be described as an empiricist type of philosophy. The four 'truths' and conditioned origination are presented as empirical discoveries which the Buddha has made and anyone can verify for himself.[23] Being empiricist, original Buddhism naturally criticised speculative philosphy as futile and meaningless (pp. 59, 62). 'System' is in fact an inappropriate term to apply to this Buddhism, which was rather an inquiry and at most a method. We should add here that the old *sūtras* offer critiques of speculative concepts such as 'soul' (*ātman*), which cannot be shown to correspond to anything in experience.[24] Speculative philosophers envisage a 'soul' in various ways, but always as, or in relation to, something else, such as matter, sensations and other experiences, perception, consciousness and so on. The Buddhist critique is always that these other data provide no evidence for any 'soul' distinct from them and in itself unobservable. This is consistent with the use of the term *dharma* for what we do observe, translatable as 'nature' but also as 'quality': we experience only qualities, not 'substances' (such as 'soul') in which speculative philosphers suppose qualities to inhere. The speculative propositions of the *Brahmajāla Sūtra*, which we have referred to above, are rejected in a similar spirit. Several of them relate to a 'soul', others to a 'universe' (*loka*) which seems similarly to be proposed as a kind of substance which might be eternal, infinite or the reverse, a universal entity in which all experience inheres. This *sūtra* explains only how such speculations arise, but other *sūtras* provide detailed critiques of them. The Buddhists found only sequences of conditions, not a universal 'being' or God (*Brahman*) or any eternal entity. The empirical discovery of the four truths and conditioned origination is opposed to all speculation.

Now the Sthaviravāda tried very meticulously to preserve this body of original inquiries and doctrines discovered by the Buddha. But the very effort to be faithful to the admired teacher, it may seem, led them to be unfaithful. The words of the Buddha were regarded as authorative, though the Buddha himself recognised no authority, including himself. These words were systematically studied, compared, classified, defined and elaborated into an *Abhidharma*. Few new empirical investigations were made (some are recorded in the *Aṭṭhasālinī*) and those only supplementary to the received propositions of the Buddha. Nothing inconsistent with those propositions could be entertained. Gradually it came to be believed that the Buddha had been omniscient: this is asserted in an apocryphal *sūtra* text, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.[25] Consequently after him nothing further remained to be known, his words must offer a complete system of what was

known. The *Abhidharma* is even stated to be infinite in extent, consistent with this infinite knowledge, if set out in full, the received texts naturally offering only an outline with indications of how theoretically one could proceed to an infinity of combinations of terms and propositions. It is in the *Kathāvatthu* that we see most clearly the standpoint and methods of this school. Amid the controversies of the schools over the words of the Buddha and their meaning, we find them here elaborating a formal logic for the purpose of checking controversial terms and propositions against the received *Tripiṭaka*. How will such and such a term fit into the system? Again, in the subsidiary *Yamaka* and its commentary, it is asked, is such and such a term distributed in such and such a proposition, though it is maintained that it is not words but meanings which constitute the ultimate authority or source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).[26] In the vast literature of the Sthaviravāda much of original Buddhism is preserved, and perhaps most of the original (before division into schools) *Tripiṭaka* in fairly accurate texts. But it is difficult to distinguish the original and be sure of its original significance, as the maze of modern studies has demonstrated.

By comparison Nāgārjuna is simple, though not easy. He cuts away the verbiage, explodes the meaningless concepts and propositions and leaves us with a few briefly formulated truths and critiques quoted from the record of the Buddha's words. The Buddha taught the four truths concerning unhappiness and how to end it, with conditioned origination as his analysis of experience expanding the second truth. Nāgārjuna criticised speculative philosophy about 'existence', 'soul', 'universe', 'infinite', and the like. Is this not a revival of the original empiricism, more faithful to it in spirit than the endless letters of the Sthaviravāda? What is wrong with speculation, says Nāgārjuna, is that its concepts 'do not apply' (*nopapadyante*) to any reality. Thus, before the commencement of the 'characteristic', the 'characterised' does not apply, and if the 'characterised' has no application then the 'characteristic' too is impossible.[27] How can 'The goer now stops' apply, when 'goer' does not apply without motion?[28] If the way possesses own-nature its development has no application, or, if the way is developed, its own-nature does not occur as you supposed.[29]

There is perhaps a grain of truth in the tradition that Nāgārjuna studied alchemy.[30] There may be more than a grain, but practically nothing has been done as yet to evaluate this tradition or to determine which Nāgārjuna is in question here, though the association with Sātavāhana indicates one of the earliest ones. At any rate there would seem to be nothing inconsis-

tent in an empiricist philosopher rejecting metaphysical speculation and dabbling in science.

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NOTES

[1] See under Abbreviations.

[2] The Sanskrit forms of the names of texts are used for the sake of simplicity of discussion but without raising the question of the 'original' language of the *Tripiṭaka*.

[3] MK. XV. 7. Saṁyukta Pali II p. 17, Sanskrit Tripāṭhī 167 ff., Chinese Taishō 99, Section 12, No. 19.

[4] Prasannapadā 269.

[5] MK. XII. 1. *Saṁyukta* Pali II pp. 19f., Sanskrit Tripāṭhī 172 f., Chinese Taishō 99, Section 12, No. 20; it will be noticed that in the *Tripiṭaka* this *sūtra* follows closely after the *Kātyāyanāvavāda*.

[6] MK. XI. 1. Pali S II 178 ff., Chinese Taishō 99, Sections 33 end, and 34.

[7] MK. XIII. 1. Pali M III, p. 245, No. 140, Chinese Taishō 26, No. 162.

[8] Prasannapadā 237.

[9] MK. XXVII. *Dīrgha* Pali No. 1, Chinese Taishō 1, No. 21, another version Taishō 21, this *Sūtra* is also preserved in a Tibetan translation: see Weller, *Asia Major* IX (1933), 195 ff. and 381 ff.

[10] See especially MK. XXIV and XXVI.

[11] The present writer offered some preliminary indications in his essay 'The Mātikā' prefixed to the PTS edition of the *Mohavicchedanī* and has more extensive discussions and conclusions in *Indian Buddhism*; it may be remarked, however, that his research leads him to conclude that the text known as the *Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra*, Taishō 1548, is the most archaic *Abhidharma* now available and best suggests the scope of the *Abhidharma* before the split into schools.

[12] *Kathāvatthu* 1ff., see particularly p. 34: *rūpam upādāya puggalassa paññatti*, 'the concept of a person, based on matter'.

[13] pp. 265-7; see also pp. 245-6 and 110-1 and Dhammasaṅgaṇi, p. 226.

[14] MK. XV. 10-1.

[15] MK. I. 6.

[16] MK. XVIII. 10.

[17] p. 40; *Mohavicchedanī*, p. 6.

[18] p. 104. There is one *Suttanta* reference to *svabhāva*, the apocryphal *Paṭisambhidāmagga* II. 178: *sabhāvena suñña*.

[19] Adikaram: *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Migoda 1946.

[20] p. 39.

[21] MK. XXIV. 16-18.

[22] See 'On the relationships between Early Buddhism and other contemporary systems', in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, London 1956,

pp. 43-63, especially 46, 52, 55, 57.

[23] See *Saṁyukta*, Pali S II, 56 ff., 81 f., etc.; Chinese Taishō 99, Section 14, No. 15, Section 12, No. 10, Section 14, No. 9, etc.

[24] *Dīrgha Mahānidāna Sūtra*, Pali D, No. 15, in Chinese in the *Madhyama* Taishō 26, No. 97, also Taishō 14 and 52; *Saṁyukta*, Pali S III, 46 f., Chinese Taishō 99, Section 2, No. 13; also the *Proṣṭhapāda Sūtra* in the *Dīrgha* and other *Saṁyukta* texts.

[25] I, pp. 131 ff.

[26] YamA 58.

[27] MK. V. 4.

[28] MK. II. 16.

[29] MK. XXIV. 24.

[30] See *Papers on the Date of Kaniṣka*, Leiden 1968, p. 331, and Rāy's *History of Chemistry in Ancient and Medieval India.*

HERBERT GUENTHER

SAṀVṚTI AND PARAMĀRTHA IN YOGĀCĀRA ACCORDING TO TIBETAN SOURCES

The earliest systematic attempt to present Buddhist philosophy in a comprehensive way was offered by the Vaibhāṣikas. They had given prominence to the concept of particular existents, but the way they tried to explain them, by inquiring into the nature of them, was the reintroduction of metaphysics. This metaphysical concern is linked with the notion of two truths, conventional (*saṁvṛti*) and ultimate (*paramārtha*). Superficially this idea seems to correspond to the traditional western conception that the philosophers, in particular metaphysicians, have access to real things which are stable, unchanging and, for that reason, fully knowable; as a consequence they recognize the world of appearance for what it is: impermanent, flickering, and unreal like a dream. The key terms here of course are 'real' and 'unreal' respectively. Certainly a dream is quite real in the sense that it is the case that we are dreaming and having certain beliefs. It is also 'unreal' in the sense that the beliefs entertained in dreaming refer to what is not the case. This shows that 'real' is used in an evaluative sense with reference to some interpretation. While it would seem natural to conclude that the real is genuine, the authentic, as opposed to the spurious, the Vaibhāṣikas did not separate reality from existence and therefore did not accept something as unreal or non-existent. Their distinction was that between the ultimately real and the empirically real. Further, the Vaibhāṣikas' metaphysical interpretation of Being does not, as might be assumed, coincide with their division of Being into that which is absolute on the one hand, and transitory on the other. Ultimately real was that of which it was assumed that it existed as substance while anything that could be claimed to exhibit substantial existence (though not having existence as substance in itself which nevertheless might be a constituent of the latter) was considered to be conventionally or empirically real and to have nominal existence. This means in other words that, for instance, the atoms which belong to the realm of the transitory were ultimately real, while that which was built up by them, the physical world, was only relatively real. Similarly, the indivisible noetic event was absolutely real, while the series built up by successive momentary noetic events was transitory. This means that what we call a mind is

M. Sprung (ed.), Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta. 89-97.

relatively real, but the elements that constitute the mind are absolutely real. A concise statement is given by dKon-mchog 'jigs-med dbang-po:[1]

"That with reference to which the idea of something being this or that is going to be lost when the thing in question is either physically destroyed or mentally split up, has the specific characteristic of the empirically real. Such is a clay jug or rosary, for if a clay jug is smashed with a hammer the idea of the jug is gone. Similarly, if one separates the beads of the rosary, the idea of the rosary no longer obtains.

That with reference to which the idea of something being this or that is not going to be lost when someone attempts to smash or split it up, has the specific characteristic of the ultimately real. Such are the partless and indivisible atoms, indivisible momentary noetic events, and the three absolutes as stated in the Abhidharmakośa:[2]

> Whatever when smashed up or split cannot
> Be called the same is, like a jug or drop (of water)
> But empirical truth. All else is ultimate truth.

Thus although that which is empirically true does not really exist in an absolute sense, it nevertheless exists veridically because according to this line of thought any particular existent entails the status of veridicality.

A quite different interpretation of the two truths is given by the Sautrāntikas, who were essentially interested in the analysis of perceptual situations. This interest led them to the re-evaluation of the so-called two truths. In order to understand their position, it will be necessary to give a very rapid survey of what is implied when we speak of perceptual and cognitive situations. It is the nature of any perceptual situation that whenever it arises we claim to be in cognitive contact with something other than ourselves or our states, and this claim extends to those situations which are commonly believed to be veridical as well as to those which are commonly held to be delusive. The two situations 'I am seeing a jug' and 'I am seeing a pink elephant' are exactly alike in having an epistemological object. The difference is that in one situation it is assumed that there also is an ontological object corresponding to the epistemological object while in the other no such object obtains.

It is further assumed that in perceptual situations the epistemological object is of the physical kind and that its corresponding ontological object, if ever there is one, must be a physical object.

But there also are situations which have an epistemological object of the physical kind but are not perceptual. For instance, the epistemological object of the two situations which I verbalize as 'I am seeing a jug' and 'I am

thinking of a jug', is in both cases of the physical kind. Yet there is an important difference. In the former case I seem to be in cognitive contact with the jug in a more direct and immediate way, while in the latter I seem to be at a distance. The perceptual situation which may be termed 'intuitive' is distinct by its directness from the thought situation which is 'discursive'. A further characteristic of the thought situation is that in it I can think of anything regardless of whether it is held to be veridical or delusive in a perceptual situation. In other words, I can think of goblins and the like without assuming that there must be an ontological object corresponding to them.

The Sautrāntikas were clearly aware of these two kinds of cognitive situations which I have described as intuitive and discursive. For them an intuitive perceptual situation which common sense holds to be veridical was absolutely real, and insofar as it was only relatively real, from the viewpoint of the absolutely real it could even be claimed to be delusive. This conclusion indeed was drawn by later Buddhist philosophers. Although the trend to consider thought situations to be delusive or relatively real was very marked, the Sautrāntikas by virtue of their penetrating analysis of cognitive situations did not commit the mistake of equating the epistemological object of the thought situation with the relative reality of this situation. In the thought situation the epistemological object of, for instance, a jug is as real as that of a goblin, but while the former fulfils the expectation of there being something denoted by the phrase 'the jug' which forms an essential sector in a perceptual situation and, therefore, is absolutely real, the latter is not so, precisely because it does not fulfil this expectation. The immediate problem now is "What is the relation between the objective constituent (*ākāra*) which accurately corresponds to the epistemological object (*ālambana*) of the perceptual situation and the physical object (*viṣaya*) which we are said to perceive in this situation." The Sautrāntikas' answer was that there is a certain sensum, an observable quality (*ākāra*), which as the objective constituent has a certain characteristic and stands in a certain relation to a certain physical object. In virtue of this relation the sensum is an appearance of the physical object. About this relation it was then said that it was a many-one relation, which is to say that many different sensa can be an appearance of several physical objects. On this view the objective constituents of perceptual situations are particular existents of a peculiar kind. They are not literally part of the perceived object although they resemble physical objects as ordinarily conceived, they are more like mental states in their privacy and dependence on the mind of the observer. The full force of this implication was realized by the subsequent mentalistic schools of Buddhism who argued

that the sensible form and size and distance of objective constituents were determined by the individual's predominant interest and beliefs (*vāsanā*). Nevertheless, the Sautrāntikas' analysis of perceptual situations already left the existence of physical objects highly hypothetical. It was certainly a mere assessment on the part of some Sautrāntikas, when they claimed that, regardless of whether the situation is veridical or totally delusive, the situation does have an objective constituent and that, where the situation is commonly held to be veridical, the objective constituent or the sensum has been created by the hypothetical object which as the emitting region is the dependently necessary condition of the sensum and its specific characteristic. Where the situation is totally delusive and where there is no emitting region at all, as in visual situations of dreams and hallucinations, it was held that the sensum was due to the independently necessary condition which in either case is a living body with a suitable brain or mind.

The Sautrāntikas in this way accepted three kinds of perceptual situations.[3] The one corresponded to what common sense holds to be a veridical situation in which the existence of an ontological object corresponding to the epistemological one is assumed. This peculiar feature is technically known as the *svalakṣaṇa*, which has been translated as 'thing-in-itself', and scholars like Stcherbatsky and others were happy to find their Kantian presuppositions apparently confirmed. From the analysis I have just given it is obvious that it has nothing to do with the unknowable thing-in-itself claimed by Kant and foisted upon Buddhist philosophy where it has absolutely no place. The second kind was of an illusory character like two moons, and the third was of visionary of hallucinatory nature and was recognized as a regular phenomenon in living religiously.

I turn now to what I call 'mentalist' views. I use the term 'mentalist' for the adherents of those views which are referred to by such terms as Yogācāra and Vijñānavāda and Cittamātra. Tibetan sources never use the equivalent for Vijñānavāda, but employ the term *rnal-'byor-spyod-pa* (Yogācāra) whenever they want to emphasize the importance of introspective techniques, and the term *sems-tsam-pa* (Cittamātra) "those who think that mind alone counts" whenever the philosophical content became the subject matter of discourse. Western scholars speak of this trend in Buddhist philosophy as 'idealism'. Unfortunately, this term is a misnomer. All philosophical schools, in one way or another, set up ideals and hence are 'idealistic'; in the context of Buddhist philosophy the term 'idealistic' as a distinguishing characterization is completely meaningless. The Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas were as 'idealistic' as the Yogācāras and Mādhyamikas. The

Yogācāras' distinguishing feature was that they developed the view that the relatively permanent conditions of interrelated sensa were minds. For them, 'mind' was not so much a 'particular mind-entity' but a symbol for the particular experience which in those persons who have had it, has brought forth the particular response verbalized in the proposition that 'mind alone counts'. The mentalists took their cue from the Sautrāntikas' non-referential aspect of mind and developed it into aesthetic experience or pure sensation. Some of the mentalists seem to have held the view that apparently coloured patches were literally mental events which, on the basis of their reasoning, then would be both non-objective and non-referential in the same way as a feeling as such would be. Such an event would be 'purely subjective'. It is true, in course of time the mentalists were accused of advocating pure subjectivism and they certainly upheld 'causal' subjectivity by which anything is defined as subjective when the necessary condition of its being is the occurrence of a percipient (mental) event. However, the accusation of subjectivism had only a limited validity and certainly never applied to all mentalistic views. The mentalists did not subscribe to 'existential' subjectivity by which it is implied that anything that owes its being to a percipient event occurring in me, exists only *for* me. Solipsism has never been a Buddhist idea. Since the mentalists offered a variety of theories of perception they are one of the most diversified schools. What distinguished them from the earlier Sautrāntikas was their renewed interest in metaphysics. This metaphysical awakening accounted for the succes of Buddhism in the whole of Asia. There is not a single aspect of later Buddhism that is not deeply indebted to the mentalists.

Metaphysical considerations were prominent in the mentalistic assumption of the three absolutely specific constitutive principles (*trisvabhāva*). In the following I am offering a different translation from the current linguistic one because the linguistic translation has been made without understanding the philosophical connotation. The first principle is called 'the notional-conceptual', (*parikalpita*). It corresponds to what we would call a formal sign whose whole function is a meaning, a signifying of something else to a knowing power, particularly in a conversational setting. Its hallmark is universality. As is well known, it is impossible for us to say or think about anything without using formal signs or concepts that are universal. Thus the jug in front of me is conceived of as a jug made of clay, brown in colour, fragile and so on. Yet the notion 'jug' does not apply just to this particular jug, but to any and all jugs, and the same is true of any other notion such as brown in colour, fragile, in front of me and so on. Further, we must have the con-

cept 'jug' in order to become aware of the jug, but it is not necessary to be aware of the concept 'jug' in order to become aware of what it signifies, its significatum. This is clearly stated by Ngag-dbang blo-bzang:[4]

'Apart from merely being a tag (a being of reason) used and created by apprehending something while verbalizing the non-ideal universality, the notional-conceptual is not something having ontological status. It is like a sky-flower having no essence.'

Since formal signs are nothing but meanings or intentions, it is possible to distinguish between first and second intentions. This is to say the jug as it is in itself is an object of first intention, while the jug as it is in the condition of being known or of being an object before the mind is an object of second intention. The Buddhist philosophers clearly distinguished between first and second intentions, which is made evident by the phrase *parikalpitasya parikalpitam*.

The second principle I translate as 'the relative' (*paratantra*). It refers to certain experiences or states with which everyone of us is familiar but which our language can only describe by the stimulus which produces these states. This is because human language developed from references to what is believed to be concrete things around us but not from what goes on in referring to them. There are no words which at the same time cover the within and the without. Only indirectly can we say, 'the state which could occur if a person saw a jug'. It is precisely this state which is indicated by 'the relative', not the relation that holds between two terms or connects two events. It is a stage in which subject and object are given together because subject *qua* subject means to function, and to function means to relate oneself to an object which is given together with the subject as a possibility of positive and negative judgments. To relate oneself to something means that the subject is constantly varying its relation to the object, but while the subject-object relation is unequivocal its functionality reveals a plurality of objects.

'Mountains, wells, plots of land, houses, residences and other objects of the world, as well as the sentient beings as the subjects therein, seem to each of us at every moment to be mutually apart and distant from each other and this is the mode of things appearing as objects external to the observer. However, since this mode of appearing is itself not something empirically verifiable, objects external to the observer do not exist apart from the functioning of the mind (*shes-pa*). What then is the mode of being or of existing of mountains, wells, houses, sentient beings and so on, which constitutes the 'relative'? When the eye sees a figure, the ear hears a sound, the nose smells a fragrance, the tongue tastes a flavour, the skin feels a touch and the mind thinks a thought, the noetic (*shes-pa*) performing all these activities is like a crystal shining in all the colours with

which it comes into contact. In this sense the relative really exists, being one substance, one fact and one state, in the same way as the dream-consciousness and the house we dream of are one event.'[5]

It is important here to note that the 'relative' (*paratantra*) is *one* unitary event, and that it is not the relation between two different things.

The third principle is 'the ideally absolute' (*pariniṣpanna*) which is said to rest on 'the relative' in the sense that the former is a presential value of the latter. It is, therefore, not something above and behind the relative, but the relative in its aesthetic immediacy from which further intellectual and other abstractions may in turn be made. Still there is a difference between the relative and the ideally absolute which can best be illustrated by what happens in and characterizes aesthetic experience. Here it is necessary to distinguish between (a) aesthetic experience *simpliciter* as it exists only at the first instant in consciousness, distinguishing within itself the aesthetically valid from the aesthetically invalid and (b) aesthetic experience enriched by other experiences which have been put back into the crucible from which aesthetic experience emerges and upon which aesthetic intuition imposes its presential value so that in the moment of the validity or enjoyment of our aesthetic intuition of, for instance, the jug (the 'ideally absolute') we can apprehend it aesthetically as a jug (the 'relative'). In other words, when a man looks at a jug he has both aesthetic and intellectual activity, but he usually does not make a clear intellectual abstraction from aesthetic experience, put it back into the crucible and then clearly intuit a new intellectually clarified object. Rather he tends to contaminate his experience with the superficial fictions of some practical concern (the 'notional-conceptual') which are characteristic of what may be termed ordinary perception as contrasted with the richness and liveliness of aesthetic awareness. In ordinary perception a man uses perception as a means to a meta-perceptual end rather than as an end in itself.

It was only natural that the mentalists should be pre-occupied with epistemological questions because these were the problems that were dealt with by all schools of Buddhism. While the Vaibhāṣikas thought that it is the eye that sees, the Sautrāntikas were of the opinion that the mind sees by means of the eye. The Sautrāntikas also had prepared the way for the mentalists' assertion that there can be no world external to the observer because every object before the mind is a content *in* mind, and that there is no reason to maintain the belief in an external world as this would be a betrayal of the philosophical questioning by catering to uncritical and naive opinions. The rejection of a world external to the observer by the mentalists forced them

to reinterpret the ideas of a conventional reality (*saṁvṛti*, *kun-rdzob*) and an absolute reality (*paramārtha*, *don-dam*). Because of the close connection that existed between the Sautrāntikas and the mentalists, it is important for an understanding of the mentalists' position to remember that for the Sautrāntikas only that about which it was believed that there existed a corresponding ontological object was absolutely real, all else conventionally real. In other words, the idea of a moon is absolutely real, but not the idea of an ego (*ātman*, *pudgala*), because the 'moon' fulfills the claim about an ontological object, but the 'ego' does not. The mentalists, dispensing with the assumption of an ontological object corresponding to the epistemological one, termed this fact of there being no external world, *śūnyatā* (*stong-pa-nyid*). The *śūnyatā* alone was absolutely real (*saṁvṛti*, *kun-rdzob*). Certainly, mountains and trees and persons are quite real in their aesthetic appearance and perception, but not in what is claimed about them when perception is used for metaperceptual ends. The relationship of the 'three absolutely specific constitutive principles' (*trisvabhāva*) with the two realities, conventional and absolute, is now obvious.

Both the 'ideally absolute' and the 'relative' are said to be real in an ultimate sense, while the 'notional-conceptual' is stated not to be so. This is to say that only the 'ideally absolute' and the 'relative' are significant, not the fiction we have about them. It is obvious from this analysis that from a purely philosophical point of view the mentalists initiated a kind of metaphysics which did not claim to reveal truths about a world that lies beyond the reach of the senses and hence, nowhere; rather were they concerned with how to take what happened here and now, how to get the things of this world into perspective. To sum up, the development of the two truths, particularly as it was developed by the mentalists, shows that there was an uninterrupted process of critical thinking, and that these two truths were intimately related to the predominant Indian interest in epistemological questions. Yet they were essentially of a metaphysical nature.

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NOTES

[1] Grub-pa'i mtha'i rnam-par bzhag-pa rim-po-che'i phreng-ba (ed. by the Mongolian Dalama rNam-rgyal rdo-rje) (n.p., n.d.), fol. 5a.

[2] VI 4. See also Louis de la Vallée Poussin, *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, Louvain, Paris, 1925, cinquième et sixième chapitres, pp. 139f.

[3] See Dkon-mchog 'Jig-med dbang-po, *loc. cit.*, fol. 6b.

[4] Tibetan Buddhist Studies of Klon-rdol bla-ma Nag-dban blo-bzan (ed. Ven. Dalama), Laxmanpuri, Mussoorie, 1963, vol. I, p. 244.

[5] See ngag-dbang blo-bzang, *loc. cit.*, p. 243.

RICHARD W. BROOKS

SOME USES AND IMPLICATIONS OF ADVAITA VEDĀNTA'S DOCTRINE OF MĀYĀ

As Professor T. R. V. Murti has observed in his *Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, an absolutism, whether it be that of Mādhyamika Buddhism, Advaita Vedānta, or F. H. Bradley, makes a distinction between an ultimately real realm (the Absolute) and a merely pragmatically real realm (the world of our veridical ordinary experience), thus entailing a doctrine of 'two truths' and a theory of illusion.[1] Most scholars who direct their attention to the claims of an absolutistic philosophy are concerned either with the task of attempting to explicate, to clarify these claims – to determine what they 'really mean' – or else of detecting the logical error that, in their estimation, could have given rise to such foolishness. Fewer have exercised themselves with the equally important task of treating absolutistic claims in a philosphical way, drawing philosophical implications from them, and then dealing philosophically with these implications. It is this latter approach that I propose to take to Advaita's doctrine of *māyā*.

There are any number of other approaches one could take, each with its own usefulness. For instance, one could approach the concept historically. One could show the development of the concept of *māyā* from its early use in some Ṛg Vedic hymns, through its appearance in the Upaniṣads, to Śaṅkara's use of the concept, and finally to its transformation at the hands of post-Śaṅkara Advaitins down to, and including, those of the twentieth century. No philosopher, after all, speculates in an intellectual vacuum and Advaitins have been especially eager to demonstrate that their philosophic system really is compatible with the orthodox (*āstika*) tradition; indeed, that it is the *only* one that does the tradition full justice. Taking this approach, one could talk about primitive attempts to understand the world: how man's breath came to be regarded as his real nature, that which sustained the body and departed from it at death, gradually evolving into the concept of *ātman*; how the inspiration (*Brahman*) of the early Vedic poets got elevated to the status of an impersonal, cosmic principle which 'underlies' all things; and how the magic power of the gods (*māyā*, *Indrajāla*) in their specific actions came to be elevated to the status of cosmic, creative power of one God (*Īśvaraśakti*). This is usually the approach of, say, orientalists, historians, or anthropologists, and it has its own merit.

M. Sprung (ed.), Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta. 98-108.

But it treats *māyā* as a museum piece, historically interesting but of little or no philosophic import today. It does little justice to the fact that the concept and the system in which it is embedded are as vitally alive and as widely held by intelligent thinkers in India today as ever they were in the past. Further, this approach too easily slips into a dismissal of the concept as being merely the product of a fanciful, prescientific imagination, thereby committing the genetic fallacy with regard to it.

Even when *māyā* has been considered as a serious philosophic claim, several quite different evaluations have been made of the claim. The *prima facie* interpretation of the word '*māyā*' is that it means 'illusion'. T. R. V. Murti, as noted above, believes that a theory of illusion is the inescapable concomitant of any absolutism.[2] But this has bothered some apologists for Advaita, and they have sought, often with great ingenuity, to soften this claim and thereby avoid its implications.

The orthodox Hindu can treat the theory of *māyā* as Advaita's attempt to make the Absolute – in this case, *nirguṇa* or *nirdharmika Brahman* – intelligible to us, even though by definition it cannot be conceived, characterized, or spoken of affirmatively, since it is without qualities (*nirguṇa*) or attributes (*nirdharmika*). Even Prof. Murti himself suggested that *māyā* is "a provisional recovery of the world", a useful 'myth' which assists us in realizing the Absolute by devaluing the world and, thus, directing our attention away from it.[3] But surely this assumes the existence of an Absolute in order to make the claim intelligible. And how do we know that there is such an Absolute? Why, from orthodox Hindu scripture, *śruti*.[4] Quite the reverse of the previous approach which takes Hindu scriptures too lightly, this takes them too seriously. Advaita becomes more theology than philosophy.

A somewhat similar approach is to say that the term '*māyā*' is a sort of signal that the kind of language Advaitins are using is not ordinary language and cannot, therefore, be analyzed in ordinary ways; it is not that '*māyā*-talk' is superior to ordinary language – though some Advaitins clearly maintain this view – but that it is just different.[5] But why? Why give Advaita a kind of 'privileged communication'? And to what end? If it is so that Advaita can convey to us profound truths about the nature of ourselves and the universe without being concerned about self-contradiction or paradoxes of self-reference or questions of meaninglessness, then '*māyā*-talk', whatever the disclaimers, *is* superior (*pāramārthika*). And we are still left to defend its right to that superiority without lapsing into theological dogmatism. If, on the other hand, this 'privileged communication' is permitted so that

Advaita can say a lot of curious things merely for the sake of bamboozling the peasants and puzzling the orientalists, of what relevance is it? No, there is only one kind of talk in Advaita, serious philosophic talk making serious claims about the nature of the world. And it must be defended in the same manner any philosophic talk is defended, by giving reasons based on experience, without recourse to privileged communications – theological or otherwise.

So if we are to avoid either dogmatic adherence or too casual a dismissal, a more philosophic approach is needed. One such that attempts to soften the implications of accepting *māyā* as a doctrine of illusion is to treat it as an axiological claim.[6] It is not that the world is illusory, this argument runs, it is just that purely worldly concerns – such as fame, a good family name, a wide circle of friends, material wealth, intellectual brilliance and wit, or sexual gratification – are of relatively little value compared with self-knowledge, or as Advaita puts it, realization of one's own identity with *Brahman*, the Absolute. It is not, these interpreters say, that the world disappears, or is seen ontologically to be an illusion, when one attains to this state of realization; it is not sub*lated*, following the usual translation of '*bādha*', it is merely 'sub*rated*'.[7] While we might be tempted occasionally to speak of the usual worldly pursuit of happiness as 'illusory', it would only be illusion in a metaphorical, not an ontological sense.

This approach has the merit of avoiding the problem that arises when one treats the world as an ontological illusion, as we shall see further on in this paper. But the question surely still arises as to whether this *Brahman*, with which one is supposed to realize one's identity, is something real – or is merely a wonderful figment of one's imagination. Even a superficial acquaintance with the literature of Advaita must convince one that it is the former that is claimed. So this approach merely sidesteps the issue of *māyā* as a theory of illusion. *Brahman* is of ultimate value because, in the final analysis, *Brahman* is the only reality. And that still leaves the world as something less than real ontologically. This approach has definite value as an insight into the practical moral implications of Advaita metaphysics, but it does nothing to solve the fundamental problem of that system.

Finally, one could take a dialectical approach to the concept of *māyā*. In such an approach, the illusoriness of the world is established by showing inherent contradictions in the categories of all realistic philosophies, thereby showing the hopelessness of explaining it on purely rational grounds. Such an approach was actually taken by several noted Advaitins: Śrī Harṣa, Citsukha, Nṛsiṁhāśrama, and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. While ingenious, this

approach commits the fallacy of *argumentum ad ignorantiam*; it may, indeed, prove that neither Sāṁkhya nor Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika categories can explain the world satisfactorily, but that does not prove that *no* realistic categories *whatever* can do the job. In order to do that, one would have to establish – perhaps in a Kantian fashion – some sort of *a priori* categories of reason before showing their inherent contradictions. Aside from the fact that few contemporary philosophers would accept this task as having been accomplished (no more by Kant than by anyone else), the mere demonstration of their inherent contradictoriness would be a demonstration that they were, after all, *not* an adequate set of *a priori* categories. This approach, in other words, is self-defeating. Though extremely instructive, it is of limited philosophic value.

I propose, then, to adopt the widely-accepted and *prima facie* interpretation of Advaita's doctrine of *māyā* as asserting that the entire pluralistic world – subjective as well as objective – is an illusion, and that this is at least an ontological claim, whatever else it may be. Advaita's claim is that *Brahman*, the Absolute, alone is real, while everything else – that is to say, anything and everything that *appears* to be other than *Brahman*; anything separate, limited, finite, and apparently existing as an independent entity – is illusory.

The merit of this approach is that it takes Advaita seriously, both in its claim about the nature of the world and in the epistemological basis of this claim. Instead of quibbling over whether the world *really* is real or not, or whether it is possible to have certain kinds of experience or not, by fervently defending separate systems based upon different assumptions, this approach deals with the question as a problem in the logic of explanation, analyzable and decidable in the same way, and to the same extent, as all other problems of explanation.

But before the analysis can begin, one of Advaita's most fundamental claims must be taken seriously. It is this: that it is possible to realize one's own identity with the Absolute, and that this experience (variously termed *Brahmajñāna*, *ātmabodha*, *aparokṣānubhūti*, etc.) sublates all other experiences, but is itself unsublatable. That is to say, there is an experience which some claim to have had – called in Advaita the 'knowledge' or 'realization' of *Brahman* – which, when one has it, is of such an overwhelming, sublime nature that one is immediately tempted to say that *all* one's previous experience had been mistaken, that one had up to then been living in an illusion.

To take the claim seriously does not, of course, mean that one must *be*-

lieve it. It simply means that an analysis of Advaita and its central doctrine of *māyā* rests so completely upon this claim that the analysis would be impossible without acknowledging it at least provisionally to see what implications follow from it.

Let us admit the possibility of *Brahmajñāna*, then, as a human experience. Three possible implications follow from it:

(1) *Brahmajñāna* is a delusion; ordinary perception (critically analyzed) is veridical; the world is real and *Brahman* is nonexistent, its apparent 'perception' being the psychological result of self-delusion coming from years of belief in it and the physiological effect of meditating out under the hot Indian sun;

(2) Both *Brahmajñāna* and ordinary perception (or experience) are veridical; both *Brahman* and the world are real;

(3) *Brahmajñāna* is veridical; ordinary perception is mistaken; the world illusory and *Brahman* alone is real.

The first alternative was accepted in ancient India by Cārvāka, and can easily be seen as the position that an A. J. Ayer or a Bertrand Russell would take, if they thought about it.[8] Bhedābheda, Sāṁkhya, and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika may be taken as successively more successful attempts to defend the second alternative. Advaitins, who were familiar with all these prior philosophic positions (and their difficulties), as well as with the various Buddhist philosophies (developing, apparently, out of quite a different initial inspiration or experience), rather boldly opted for the third alternative.

One of the implications of accepting the third alternative is that the pluralistic world, the world of our everyday, ordinary experience, cannot be real; it must be only an appearance. But what do we mean when we say that something is an appearance? We mean, do we not, that whatever state of affairs (to give it the broadest possible description) we happen to be referring to only *seems* to be what we perceive it to be, but is not *really* so. That is to say, though we don't deny the existence of a perception (or, perhaps, more generally, an experience), we do deny the judgment made about that perception (or experience). We make a distinction between the perception and the truth value of the judgment based upon that perception; we may admit the existence of the percept, but we deny the truth of the assertion made about it. Furthermore, we distinguish between a state of affairs that 'appears to be such-and-such' and a state of affairs that 'appears *to me* (or you, or him) to be such-and-such'. In the first case, we recognize an intersubjective character about the apparent state of affairs; to use a familiar and overworked example, we all see the stick in the water as 'bent' – and

continue to see it as 'bent' even when we know it really is not. In the second case, however, there is a purely subjective character to the apparent state of affairs; the 'blood' that Lady Macbeth sees on her hands cannot be seen by the doctor and nurse observing her and the 'dagger' that Macbeth himself sees is not seen by the audience as a stage prop. Although English usage is not consistent in the matter, we sometimes distinguish between the two by calling the first an 'illusion' and the second a 'delusion'. Following this distinction, we may say that an illusion is intersubjective, while a delusion is either (1) a purely private experience, the judgment about which does not reflect a true state of affairs in the world, or (2) the acceptance of an illusion as a true state of affairs in the world. To say that something is an appearance, therefore, entails that it is either an illusion or a delusion.

The word 'illusion', as I am using it, implies an apparent objectivity; this is evident from the fact that we continue to perceive the illusory state of affairs even when we know that it is not the way things really are. The word 'delusion', on the other hand, will imply an apparent state of affairs which is subjective. But this can cover a very great deal of territory! We use the word 'delusion' to cover beliefs that are fervently held in the face of evidence against them, hallucinations, and simple acceptance of perceptual illusions at face value. Delusion, in any case, seems always to involve belief of some sort, while illusion does not. Now, people are able to believe (have believed!) the most incredible things, so to narrow the scope of the word 'delusion' to fit the requirements of the problems of Advaita, I will arbitrarily limit my use of the word to beliefs involving direct perception (or, more generally, immediate experience). That is to say, I will use the word 'delusion', for purposes of this paper, to mean a mistaken judgment about a perception (or an experience) which is believed, by the person making the judgment, to be true; e.g., 'that stick [in the water] is bent' or 'that is a dagger floating unsupported in the air before me' or 'that [pointing at a rope] is a snake' or 'there are two moons in the sky tonight'.

This distinction may help clarify the doctrine of *māyā* in Advaita. To say that the world is *māyā* is to point to its illusory status. But this is not to deny the *existence* of the world; it is merely to deny it *reality*. The world is not a *delusion*, i. e., an hallucination or a dream, a mere figment of the soul's imagination – though Prakāśānanda's *dṛṣṭisṛṣṭivāda* interpretation of Advaita makes this claim, and some modern purveyors of Advaita, like Radhakrishnan, sometimes seem to interpret *māyā* this way. No, the world is an *illusion*. And, as such, it has an intersubjective character about

it. Hence, while Advaita has problems enough with it, the appearance of a common world to all souls is not one of them.

The *delusion* comes in when the souls – such as you and I – accept the māyāvic world at face value. This, as Advaita points out, is due to our ignorance, a rather straightforward observation, since we naturally would be ignorant about the illusory status of the world until we had some reason to believe that the world was other than what it appeared to be. Again, this seems to me to show the significance to Advaita of the *Brahmajñāna* experience: if this experience were not taken seriously, it is unlikely that anyone would ever seriously advance the proposition that the world is illusory. It is, after all, a rather sweeping claim! Though devising a set of categories that would explain the world might prove difficult, the effort would not be abandoned merely on that account. It is just as it would be if we never removed sticks from water; we would continue to accept our perception of them as 'bent' as veridical. It might seem *odd* to some that *all* sticks in water look bent whereas not all of them do out of water. But that could easily be taken as just one among a host of peculiarities about the fascinating world we live in.

Furthermore if the world is illusory, and we are deluding ourselves when we accept it at face value, it follows that real values in life lie elsewhere. Thus, the word *māyā* also functions, as discussed earlier, as a reminder of the worthlessness, in the final analysis, of purely worldly things. In this way, Advaita, like all other Indian philosophical systems, has some practical implications. Although it is not my intention to go into the matter here, it can be observed in passing that the doctrine of *māyā* has axiological as well as ontological implications.

Furthermore, when someone claims that something is an illusion (or a delusion), he is implying *more* than just ontological and axiological judgments about that thing. He is implying some epistemological judgments as well. The statement 'x is an illusion (or a delusion)' asserts, in fact, four different things: (1) it asserts that x is not real; (2) it asserts that the belief or judgment 'x is real' is false; (3) it assumes an epistemological norm that excludes x; and (4) it implicitly claims that the appearance of x can be explained in terms of that norm. For example, we accept the perception of the stick as straight to be normative and explain its 'bent' appearance by means of the law of light refraction. Macbeth attempts an explanation of the appearance of the 'dagger' when he calls it "A dagger of the mind, a false creation/Proceeding from the heat oppressed brain." To say that something is an illusion (or a delusion), therefore, is either explicitly or implicitly to promise to give an explanation

of that thing in terms of an epistemological norm which does not include it. To *fail* to explain that thing is to make a claim about the nature of the world without any rational basis to sustain that claim. It is to fail to show cause why that thing should not be deemed real and the perception (or experience) of it veridical. And that is not philosophy; it is sheer dogmatism. Any such unsupported claim must be rejected. The word 'illusion' (or 'delusion') is, therefore, to put it graphically, a promissory note.

This is the crux of the matter, and takes us back to the question of *Brahmajñāna*. If this supposed realization of *Brahman* is, indeed, the experience that sublates (and subrates) all other experiences, showing all other experiences to be mistaken (*mithyā*), then *Brahman* is the epistemological norm in terms of which all else is explained. Advaita's principal task, therefore, is to offer an explanation of the illusory appearance of this pluralistic world when, it claims, there is really only unity, *Brahman*. If the explanation succeeds, we must consider Advaita's claims about *Brahmajñāna* and the ontological status of the world rather more seriously than most Western philosophers have heretofore done. If the explanation, on the other hand, fails, it means that Advaita has offered us a promissory note without having money in the bank to back it up – and we need not take its claims seriously. It is not my intention to analyze Advaita's attempted explanation here, merely to point out the importance of it.[9] But, clearly, this is the principal implication of Advaita's doctrine of *māyā*.

But suppose, for the moment, Advaita's support of its contentions does succeed. There is another interesting implication about calling the world an illusion. That involves what might be called the '*māyā* paradox', and bears some resemblance to the so-called 'liar paradox' and other paradoxes of self-reference. For, if the world is an illusion, then the philosophy of Advaita with its doctrine of *māyā*, since it is part of the world, is part of the illusion; the doctrine that the world is an illusion is itself an illusion! While this does not land Advaita in the direct paradox into which one lands when one says something like 'This statement is false', it does, nonetheless, give Advaita a paradoxical appearance at its very heart. It leads one to wonder what it could possibly *mean* to say 'The doctrine that the world is an illusion is itself an illusion'. It leads one to wonder if something hasn't gone wrong somewhere and to question the assumptions that got one to this point. The opponents of Advaita – particularly the Viśiṣṭādvaitins – were quick to note this implication of the *māyā* doctrine and point it out. Advaitins have usually responded by saying that this paradoxicality just further supports their contention that the world is hopelessly inconsistent and, therefore, illusory. But this is just

begging the question! Again, it is not my purpose to solve Advaita's problem, merely to point it out as one of the implications of the doctrine of *māyā*.

There is a further use of the word '*māyā*', however. Frequently the creation of the world in Advaita's cosmogony is likened to the creation of imaginary elephants, etc. by someone called a '*māyāvin*', i.e., a *māyā*maker. From the description of the *māyāvin's* creations, it is clear that the *māyāvin* is a hypnotist.[10] It sounds as though Advaitins were claiming that *Brahman* had us all hypnotized into believing that there was a world before us and that we daily were making our various ways around in it, but that is all a mere figment of our imagination. Aside from the fact that this analogy would seem to make the world a delusion rather than an illusion – though that might amount to a mere quibble, since it would be so widely held! – and aside from the fact that it does not completely do away with the assumption of plurality (unless *Brahman* hypnotizes himself!), this use of the term '*māyā*' has certain unfortunate implications for Advaita. The first of these is a version of the paradox just mentioned, since the notion that we are all hypnotized by *Brahman* into believing that there is a pluralistic world around and within us would itself be part of our hypnotic illusion. While this may not be as paradoxical as the previous '*māyā* paradox', it does seem odd. Far more serious for Advaita, however, is the second implication: if we are under *Brahman's* hypnotic spell, then waking up from that spell would no longer be within our own power to effect – and that contradicts a key tenet of Advaita. All Advaitins assume that *Brahmajñāna* is possible for anyone who wishes to undertake the mental and spiritual discipline deemed its necessary prerequisite. Since attainment of this beatific vision is held to be the ultimate goal of life, the above interpretation of the doctrine of *māyā* would stultify the individual effort to attain this goal. To the Advaitin, this is tantamount to saying that the interpretation must be wrong. In order to avoid this implication, we must assume that *Brahman* is merely *like* a hypnotist in his creation of an apparently pluralistic world, but is not actually one with respect to the poor, deluded souls in it. The question then is: how can you make sense of this analogy without begging the question of explaining apparent plurality in terms of unity? Again, it is not my purpose to answer the question, but merely to raise it.

Finally, in my discussions in India with contemporary apologists for Advaita, some of them even used the word '*māyā*' as a claim that the appearance of the world is, after all, inexplicable. (This seems to rest upon a translation of '*anirvacanīya*' as 'inexplicable', which is, I believe, wrong.) Clearly that is dogmatism. If my analysis of illusion (or delusion) is correct, the claim '*x* is

an inexplicable illusion' is self-contradictory. Surely, when Advaita's doctrine of *māyā* is challenged by critics, Advaitins must avoid the temptation to use the word '*māyā*' in this way. Never will one find this use in the writings of the major Advaitins, such as Śaṅkara, Sureśvara, Padmapāda, Vācaspati Miśra, Sarvajñātman, and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. Only in recent times have some contemporary apologists for Advaita tried to use the doctrine of *māyā* this way.[11] This use seems to be traceable to the minor sixteenth-century Advaitin Nārāyaṇa Sarasvatī, author of a *vārtika* on Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*.[12] It probably represents a degeneration of Advaita at the hands of lesser men than its eight and ninth-century founders. Or, on the other hand, it may represent a desperate attempt on the part of the faithful to protect Advaita against refutation by emptying it of its significance!

These, then, seem to me to be the principal uses of the doctrine of *māyā* as it appears in Advaita Vedānta. Though often paradoxical, it certainly is a fascinating and philosophically daring doctrine. Perhaps this is what gives it some of its philosophical charm. For sheer audacity of metaphysical claim, it hardly has an equal. I have, however, been less interested in clarifying or defending the doctrine than in pointing out the implications of these principal uses. The chief of these implications is Advaita's need to explain how it is we seem to experience a pluralistic world when there is really only the unitary *Brahman*. To say that the world is *māyā* is implicitly to promise to give such an explanation. But the doctrine of *māyā* is not, as some of its modern protagonists seem to believe, itself that explanation.

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NOTES

[1] T.R.V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, George Allen and Unwin, London 1955, p. 104.

[2] *Loc. cit.*

[3] From remarks made during our discussions at the Brock Workshop on 'The Doctrine of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta', April 24-27, 1969.

[4] Prof. Murti, in fact, admitted this in his remarks.

[5] This suggestion was made by Prof. Karl H. Potter during the Brock Workshop.

[6] Cf. R.P. Singh, *The Vedānta of Śaṅkara: A Metaphysics of Value*, Bharat Publishing House, Jaipur, 1949.

[7] Cf. Eliot Deutsch, *Advaita Vedānta: A Philosophical Reconstruction* University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1969, pp. 15-17.

[8] In fact, I once heard Prof. Herbert Feigl offer the physiological 'explanation' –

almost exactly in the words I have used – in one of his lectures in his 'Philosophy of Science' course, University of Minnesota, spring quarter, 1959.

[9] It is my personal feeling that Advaita's explanation must proceed by analogy, since deductive argument would be impossible in the absence of any possible universal generalizations about a unitary Absolute. I feel that a careful study of Advaita's doctrine of superimposition (*adhyāsa*) will show that Śaṅkara, at least, was aware of this and intended his examples such as 'the rope and the snake' (*rajjusarpa*) to function in this respect, i.e., as explanatory analogies or models. I further believe that an analysis of these analogies will prove that they are all inadequate to support Advaita's position. See my unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 'The Rope and the Snake: An Investigation of the Concept of '*Adhyāsa*' (Superimposition) in Advaita Vedānta'; University of Minnesota, 1968.

[10] The usual translation of '*māyāvin*' as 'juggler' is misleading.

[11] Cf. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, George Allen and Unwin, London rev. ed., 1951, vol. 1, pp. 183-4; S.K. Das, *Towards a Systematic Study of the Vedānta*, by the author, Calcutta, 1931, p. 164, Swami Nikhilananda, *Self-Knowledge* [*Atmabodha*] *of Sri Sankaracharya*, Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1962, pp. 55, 62-3, 71, and 73. This is but a sampling of some of the more noted present-day Advaita apologists who interpret *māyā* in this way.

[12] Cf. Surendranath Bhattacharyya, 'Śankara on Māyā and Avidyā' *Prabuddha Bharata* 65 [Sept. 1960], 373.

J. G. ARAPURA

MĀYĀ AND THE DISCOURSE ABOUT BRAHMAN

This essay is conceived only as a very restricted kind of inquiry, as the title itself shows. What is maintained here as the prime interest is to discover some of the objectives in the original articulation of the *māyā* theory and then to discuss at some length what may be shown as the principal one among them. The origin and development of the *māyā* concept can be, and has been sometimes, investigated from an historical point of view, which is not entertained here. There is again the approach of the metaphysician who sees himself as a partisan and therefore feels impelled to join issue and to argue for or against this concept which is one of the most controversial of all philosophical concepts. From the time of Rāmānuja and other critics of *māyā-vāda* and the Śankarite supporters of it, metaphysicians as a rule have got inside the debate. This temptation too is rigidly avoided in the present search.

It is in Śaṅkara that we find the arguments for *māyā* (or *avidyā*) organized into a well articulated theory (*vāda*) although many of them had already been present in Gauḍapāda before him. History has recognized Śaṅkara as the father of the theory but no one will contend that he was the absolute progenitor of the idea as such. After Śaṅkara the Advaita thinkers developed it further into a general theory of knowledge with the designation *ajñānavāda* (theory of ignorance), not unlike, in broad features of dialectics – but quite unlike in metaphysical import – the *vijñānāvāda* of Buddhism.

Śaṅkara was primarily what we could call today a philosophical theologian, whose urgent interest was to explain in the most cogent rational terms the central message of the Vedānta. This led him to the theory of non-dualism (*advaitavāda*), out of which by sheer force of logical implication arose the subsidiary theory of illusion (*māyāvāda, avidyāvāda*). Śaṅkara realized that if duality (in all such ubiquitous forms as subject-object, thinker-thought, thinker-thing, etc.,) is to be avoided while explaining (not explaining away) the world by *māyā*, the principle of *avidyā* needs to be recognized as a concomitant condition, for both mean illusion. Then there is the question where does *avidyā* actually reside? Śaṅkara himself inclined to the veiw that it does so in persons who are the subject of illusion.

M. Sprung (ed.), Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta. 109-121.

It was felt by later Vedānta writers that a general epistemological theory that distinguished and comprehended *avidyā* and *māyā* was needed, and the result was a vastly more developed and considerably more complex *ajñānavada*.[1]

Māyā theory has implications for several things, mainly experience, the world and language. The original motivation in articulating the theory was to rationalize these implications by making them cohere with the fundamental metaphysical position of Advaita Vedānta. In this sense it is clear that *māyāvāda* is simply a rational postscript of *advaitavāda* and is in no way prescriptive of it. But then such a rational postscript has been necessary not only for theoretical considerations but for existential ones as well. It must never be lost sight of that the Vedānta, like most other Indian systems, is not only philosophy but also religion. This essential integrity of the two ensconced in the very heart of Indian thinking is a matter of no mean significance for a faithful and objective study of the matter; disregard of this fact would be a violation of the first principles of scientific phenomenology. So then, besides the theoretical purpose of making the rational implications of this particular metaphysics for experience, the world and language cohere with the fundamental Advaita view of reality, there has been also the existential one of providing a framework and a context for the quest of liberation (*mukti, nirvāṇa*). For this reason, Śaṅkara declares that for the Vedānta the thought that there may be no liberation will not arise even in dream,[2] wherein lies, he feels, the uncontestable superiority of his position. Actually, the real reason for Śaṅkara's criticism of two systems, viz., the Sāṁkhya dualistic realism and Buddhist (Yogācāra) subjective idealism is their inability to account for liberation. These may be singled out precisely because they are diametrically opposite and because their views, if adhered to, will destroy rational grounds of experience as well as the possibility of a world.

As far as experience is concerned Śaṅkara is as realistic as the Sāṁkhya, only more logically so. The Sāṁkhya has been hard put to it to explain experience, its ground and its subject on the basis of its eternal dualism between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (*pradhāna*). By definition, *puruṣa,* which is intelligence, cannot be the principle on which experience springs or in which it resides. But neither can the non-intelligent *pradhāna* be that. Sāṁkhya is really caught in an impossible logical situation which will undercut the entire meaning of liberation. Logic would reduce Sāṁkhya to the absurd position of having to say that experience (suffering) is itself the experiencer (sufferer).[3] This is where Vedānta comes in with its doctrine of *māyā* or

ajñāna. "An enquiry about *ajñāna* is (therefore) an investigation into the *a priori* conditions of experience," writes Prof. T. R. V. Murti, who adds, "such a thesis requires to be elaborated and justified. A general and comprehensive theory has to be formulated."[4] Śaṅkara forces the Sāṁkhya to admit that the relation of causes of experience (suffering) and of experiences (sufferers) is not real but the effect of *avidyā.* At this point Śaṅkara speaks as a meticulous empiricist who will accept the phenomenal experience as just what it is and no more and no less.[5] Phenomenal reality is its own ground and the true perception of it will reveal the ground of that ground, which is the non-dual Reality.

Against the Buddhist subjective idealists, who denied the existence of the external world, Śaṅkara urges a number of arguments, the first and strongest among which is that we must admit the existence of what we actually perceive. If anyone has any suspicion that Śaṅkara was a subjective idealist himself, let that be laid to rest here. In fact he almost stoops to sarcasm when he suggests that we should no more pay heed to a man who while perceiving external things with his senses denies their existence than believe the report of a man who while eating and experiencing the feeling of satisfaction avers that he does not do so.[6] Strange as it may sound, *māyāvāda* implies a very strong affirmation of the reality of the world. In this respect it goes exactly as far as empiricism would want to go. No empiricist ever ascribes absolute reality to the world in any case. Analogical reasoning itself, which is so important in Vedānta philosophy, is based on the reality of the perceived world as it is on the reliability of experience. This is how one prefers the report of perceptions of the waking state to those of the dreaming state as clues to Reality. Likewise the real rope seen as rope rather than as snake, is truer to fact. The genuine philosopher must always respect fact as against the would-be philosopher who denies what he sees.[7]

It is, however, to be acknowledged that a mere assertion that the world exists is of no philosophical value. It does not take a philosopher to do that, as everyday life is lived on such as assumption; neither is it of any value to reverse what all life has assumed. The philosopher's task is to explain *the way* the world exists, the knowledge of which will be integral to the search for meaning and the quest for liberation. The Vedānta philosopher is also clear in his mind that the world offers no standpoint from which to speak about the world or to gain knowledge about it. Hence his insistence on *śruti* (revelation). What the world contributes to the knowledge of itself is analogies based on the distinction between fact and non-fact present in its very structure. When that (by definition) transcendentally originated

knowledge bodies forth with the aid of analogies provided by the phenomenal world we have a well-ordered and coherent knowledge of the world giving rise to a system of meaning and a framework for the aspiration towards liberation.

All this leads one to the central objective of the Vedānta in the advaitic form, which is to explain how speaking about *Brahman*, the Ultimate Reality, is made possible. The Vedānta knows that philosophy is about *Brahman*, not about the world or experience. Knowledge about these latter things arises as *modes* of the knowledge of *Brahman*. The inalienable connecting link is discourse itself. Therefore *māyā* must be understood fundamentally as discourse about *Brahman*. This is the line along which we will seek to develop our exposition of *māyāvāda*.

I. SAṀVṚTI AND MĀYĀ

We will argue here that one of the main reasons for forging the theory of *māyā* is the quest for making discourse about *Brahman* (which is indiscoursible) possible. It is a well-known fact that as a dialectical device *māyā* is a variant of the more general theory of *saṁvṛti*, explicitly fashioned by the Mādhyamika dialecticians, chiefly Nāgārjuna. It is Gauḍapāda who introduced the Buddhist epistemological method into the Vedānta: this too is well-known. The schema adopted by Nāgārjuna necessitated the positing of an absolute reality (*paramārthasatya*) conceived as *śūnya* as against a phenomenal reality (*saṁvṛtisatya*). This division has a parallel in *vijñānavāda*. However, what appears to be no more than a purely schematic division for the Buddhists was something quite different for Gauḍapāda. The problem at issue is not whether *paramārthasatya* (*śūnya*) in the Mādhyamika language, or *pariniṣpanna* in the *vijñānavāda* language, is ontological reality rather than a mere speculative supposition, that whole matter itself being still controversial, but on what grounds it can be said to be so if it might be. We should note a very deep divergence here between Gauḍapāda and the Buddhists. Gauḍapāda clearly attests to the fact that the doctrine of *Brahman* and the consequent doctrine of *māyā* – along with that of the identity of the *jīvas* with *Brahman* – is strictly derived from the Upaniṣads and were not taught by the Buddha.[8] Even his celebrated insistence on the primary use of reason as attested, for instance, by his declaration that *śruti* (scripture), while it speaks of creation either from the existent or the non-existent, has to be given up in favour of that which is ascertained by reason, must not lead us to suppose that he used dialectic

in the free and uninhibited manner of the Buddhists. His essential concern is *Brahman*, but it is only that he goes about demonstrating *Brahman* with the tools that the Buddhists had forged. But the picture becomes much clearer in Śaṅkara's enunciation of the Advaita Vedānta, from which all ambiguities with respect to the use of the Buddhist method has been removed. Henceforth the difference between a logical method and a purely dialectical method becomes perceptible.

It is possible to see that the *māyā* doctrine of the Vedānta has its origin in logical thinking while the *saṁvṛti* doctrine as set forth by all the relevant schools of Buddhism, particularly the Mādhyamika, has its origin in dialectical thinking. 'Logical' here means making it possible for something to be said about Reality (*Brahman* in this context), taking, of course, the original meaning of 'logos'; 'dialectical' likewise means the discovery, through talking, of that about which something may be said. The gist of this may be expressed this way: in the case of the one, there is Reality but it cannot be talked about without some sort of contradiction, and in the case of the other, the possibility of talk is accepted without inquiring, however, into the origin of talk – but there is no knowing what reality or reality-substitute, if any, it will lead to, and what significance it will bear.

II. LOGICAL ORIGIN OF MĀYĀVĀDA

In dealing with this question, first of all the reader must be warned that what is being dealt with here is not the metaphysical theory or theories of language found in the Vedānta, about which great classical works like Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* offer ample instruction. The reason for sidestepping such a momentous issue is not convenience or fear or even want of an opinion but simply the absence of its warrantability in an essay that is conceived as strictly phenomenological in scope. Here then, we are not immersed in thinking about language itself, as ontological or otherwise, but only in specifically formulated *Brahman*-language, which, of course, as Śaṅkara himself believes, is the substance of *śruti*.

There is here an essential – not accidental – definitional schism because *Brahman* is defined as indefinable. If it were purely a dialectical situation the matter could simply rest there as there is nowhere to go; from such a deadend, however, there may contingently arise different alternate possibilities, only to be instantaneously swallowed up, severally or altogether, by some allconsuming frame like the *catuṣkoṭi* (the fourfold frame of the Mādhyamika). As the situation in the Vedānta is not purely dialectical but

logical, the schism itself has to be given ontic being. The primary reason why it is a logical situation is that *Brahman* is that which reveals itself as the Alone-Being and as the All-Being, needing no other knowledge.[9]

All definitions of *Brahman* must fall outside the intended realm and they involve the character of the subject-matter. The real problem is not what is said about *Brahman* but the saying. Everything that is truly said, on account of the saying of it, is a negation of the intent in the saying, for such is the coherent definition of *Brahman* the non-dual, the One without a second. *Brahman* is throughout spoken of as attributeless (*nirguṇa*),[10] as devoid of all differences of space, place and time (*digdeśakālādibhedaśūnya*).[11] The words *śūnya* (devoid of) and *vivarjita* (free from), like many other similar words, added to other predicative terms form compounds signifying negative attributes of *Brahman*, and there is a prolific use of these in all Advaita Vedānta works. Thus *Brahman* is said to be free from the entire universe (*sarvaprapañcavivarjita*),[12] free from all objects (*sarvaviṣayavivarjita*),[13] free from all phenomenal attributes and determinations (*sarvadharmaviśeṣavivarjita*),[14] etc. Likewise it transcends all empirical operations (*sarvavyavāhāragocarātīta*).[15] Besides, *Brahman* is free from all adjuncts (*nirupādhi*), from all differences (*bhedas*), whether homogeneous (*sajātīya*), heterogeneous (*vijātīya*) or inherent (*svagata*). If these and hundreds of other expressions like them are literally true then they are also literally false, for the very fact that they can be formulated militates against their content as well as intent. Statements like *tat tvam asi* which purport the identity of *Brahman* and the individual self (*jīva*) are especially vulnerable. Śaṅkara, following the lead of Kāśakṛtsna, emphatically advocates such an unqualified identity.[16] *Tat tvam asi* is the most notable *śruti* statement that purports the abolition of the distinction between *Brahman* and the individual self, but by the very fact that it manifests itself as a verbal entity both distinctionlessness and distinction are confirmed together the one directly and by intent and the other indirectly and without intent.

III. AVIDYĀ THE EXISTENTIAL STARTING POINT

In order to abolish distinction, however, its real nature and the principle on which it is founded have to be recognized. It is of the nature of *avidyā* and made of (by) *avidyā* (*avidyākṛta*).[17] This is an abiding theme for Śaṅkara and his followers. Rendered into the language of phenomenology, *avidyā* may be described as the existential fact of consciousness as it con-

fronts itself. *Tat tvam asi* means then that the transcendent essence of consciousness is *ātman* but whenever this truth is verbally expressed there will be a logical contravention of the existential fact of consciousness confronting itself, although the facticity of the fact cannot be intentionally purported. Distinction will not have to be presupposed if the truth remains strictly implicit. Undoubtedly, implicit truth is what is intended in *śruti* statements, but stated truth presupposes extension and therefore distinction. But is there a way in which implicit truth can remain implicit? There seems to be no direct way whatsoever. Nevertheless the irony of having to make implicit truth explicit may sometimes be dramatically expressed in silence. Such dramatic expression is what is witnessed in the rather rhetorical silence observed by Bāhva before Vāskali, in answer to the question about *Brahman*, followed by the words "silent is this Ātman" (*upaśānto 'yam ātma*).[18] From the context where this episode is narrated it is clear that what Śaṅkara has in mind is the irony of having to say what cannot be said, fully knowing that silence itself is excluded from speech only so that the actuality of *Brahman* may be indicated by such dramatic enactment.[19] Silence by itself is no more capable of expressing *Brahman* than speech. The purpose in resorting to the device of irony seems to come clearly to light when we notice that Śaṅkara invokes three well-known passages of the Upaniṣads, viz., "Not this, not this";[20] "it is different from the known, it is also different from the unknown";[21] "Whence words, along with the mind, return not attaining it."[22] The difference between speech and silence is the analogical measure of the difference between *Brahman* with distinction and *Brahman* without distinction. The difference measured thus is *māyā*: here is the significance of the etymology of the word, from *mā*, to measure. It thus becomes very instructive to note that Śaṅkara himself concludes his narration of the episode with an explanatory quotation from *smṛti*. "The cause, O Nārada, of perceiving me as possessing the qualities of all beings is the *māyā* produced by me; (but) thou shouldst not know (think of) me as such."[23]

Avidyā seems to be the fundamental phenomenological starting point from which *māyā* emerges as an explanatory principle, in some ways supported by perception and inference. *Avidyā* then seems to be a fact of consciousness, while *māyā* appears to be a postulate, drawing its substance from *avidyā* and its raison d'etre from the paradoxically expressed aspect of ontological Reality, *Brahman*. Śaṅkara himself, in the quest for an experiental description of *māyā*, has recourse to *avidyā*. *Avidyā* is that which informs *māyā*.[24] Śaṅkara, therefore, treats both terms synonymously.

The ways in which *avidyā* and *māyā* have been distinguished by later dialecticians reflect the particular metaphysical path that an original and genuine phenomenological problem has been obliged to travel. They are distinguished as two forms of *ajñāna*. In treating both *avidyā* and *māyā* as postulates these dialecticians have been forced to regard them as coordinated parts of the same general theory; they have also tended to examine them as some kind of infra-ontological or quasi-ontological entities. If this is the case they have been looking at the matter in a somewhat different way than Śaṅkara himself, who, it seems, on the one hand, thought of *māyā* as the structure of discourse about *Brahman*, keeping in view the character of *Brahman*, revealed in *śruti*, and therefore as the *logos* of the world,[25] and, on the other, thought of *avidyā* as that which informs *māyā*. The idea of distinguishing the two even in a methodological manner clearly found no place in his thinking.

What distinguishes the method of Śaṅkara from that of the later dialecticians is mainly the much higher degree of scholastic speculation prevailing in the latter. The scholastic speculation is principally manifested in the almost literal factuality that is associated with cosmological and psychological explanations, which have always had an important place in Indian philosophy. As a result an explanatory account of the genesis and composition of any given condition tends to become a substitute for the immanent or non-immanent existential meanings of that condition. But in Śaṅkara the insightful simplicity typical of his utter genius forestalled any domination by that line of scholastic thinking. Having understood the mythic character of all cosmology and psychology, he could wave them away at any time for the sake of the existential. What is significant about the post-Shankarites is not any philosophical gain or loss – there is not much of either – but the interesting speculative results brought about by their formidable analytical skills, comparable to those of the Buddhist dialecticians themselves, who in their own way added little to the paradigmatic insights of the Buddha. As an instance of their speculation, there is a fairly universal concern in them to relate *ajñāna* to the *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas.* Likewise, we meet with a great interest in classifying *ajñāna* into types such as, for example, *mūlājñāna* (primordial ignorance) and *tūlājñāna* (diverse empirical offshoots of *ajñāna*), put forward by Vācaspati Miśra. Again we notice that *ajñāna* as the causal principle of the universe occupies much attention. One of the truly typical solutions to this problem consists in the proposal, shared by several, that *ajñāna* be seen as two-fold power (*śakti*), namely of veiling (*āvaraṇa*) and projecting (*vikṣepa*).[26] Incidentally, it is not unimportant to

note that these speculative efforts are paralleled in the Purāṇas, which are contemporaneous.

In a sense, to study the development of the theory of *ajñāna* is to study the whole history of Advaita Vedānta since Śaṅkara, but then, most of the discussions found there are mainly of historical interest. So we must revert to the phenomenological exposition of *avidyā*; it is possible, however, to remain with it even if we meander through the various scholastic speculations of the post-Shankarites.

Avidyā must be regarded as an existential phenomenon, nevertheless a very special one, as it is essentially consciousness confronting itself under the conditions of the assumption of absolute knowledge, without which it cannot be what it is. Understood that way, it appears to be positive privation or absence, in fact, the reverse side of absolute knowledge. Its effort to understand itself is the negative aspect of the effort to possess absolute knowledge. This theme receives a particularly cogent examination in Vidyāranya's *Vivaraṇaprameyasaṁgraha* and Madhusūdana Saraswati's *Advaitasiddhi.* The positive character of *avidyā*, Madhusūdana Saraswati argues, is revealed by the intuitive knowledge of *sakṣin* (the witness self), which is described as pure consciousness reflected on the *vṛtti* (mode) of *avidyā.*[27] He is careful to point out that *avidyā* has for its object something that is known *a priori*; it refers to a known unknown, based on a knowledge that is transcendentally originated (through *śruti*), which then becomes the absolute condition of all ignorance. The unknown is *Brahman* itself. Therefore the statements 'I am ignorant', 'there is no knowledge in me' express existential awareness which has for its object the witness self as it apprehends the known unknown, *Brahman.* We must concede, however, that the existential insight well recognizable in this is often concealed in an archaic cosmology and an equally archaic psychology of sleep, dream and waking, which scholasticism analyzes as literal fact rather than in terms of its deeper mythic significance.

Avidyā must not be understood as talk about the conditions and character of human experience independent of *śruti.* It is really nothing but the individual (*sākṣi*) modality of the talk about *Brahman* which in its universal modality is denoted by '*māyā*'. Some of the modern meanings of the word 'myth' adequately convey the meaning of the word '*māyā*'. *Māyā* is to be understood as the utmost universalization of mythic being, as the unbounded frame and structure of all individual myths, unified into a single interpretive system. If rhetoric is permitted, it can be described as the fathomless, boundless ocean from which all things come and into which all things disappear. It may be objected that this is the kind of talk that one

makes about *Brahman*. Yes, that is precisely the point. *Brahman* talk also turns out to be *māyā* talk. Clearly the subject of discourse, that is *māyā*, is not itself but *Brahman*, and as such the paradox of self-invalidation implied in the statement 'the world is illusory', it being part of that illusory world, resolves itself.[28] If *māyā* is the logical structure of the discourse about *Brahman* then discourse about *māyā* is simply its obverse side, existing only tenuously. It is in that sense that one must speak of it, as has been spoken of by Advaitins, as neither real nor unreal but indefinable (*anirvacanīya*).

IV. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MĀYĀ OF VEDĀNTA AND SAṂVṚTI OF BUDDHISM

The predominance of the logical in the one and the dialectical in the other has already been noted. However, it is correct to say that Buddhism really got into a bind while the Vedānta did not. There is something a bit nonsensical about beginning a talk by denying everything that may serve as the subject of talk, and this could involve a kind of self-contradiction (different from the Vedantic self-contradiction of discoursing about that which is not discoursible) as it amounts to cutting off the ground of talk. The method of pure dialectical negation, with no ontology involved, means that we make statements aimed at other statements rather than at any state of affairs, and when all statements demolish one another the entire structure will collapse through the power of dialectics and then we have *śūnyatā.* Strictly within the procedure of negative dialectics, can *śūnyatā* be regarded as a state of affairs? That is the question. As statements have no reference point other than one another they can only nullify one another. In contradistinction, it is clear that in the Vedānta each statement nullifies itself in the light of the character of *Brahman* which is implicitly (not explicitly) present in *Brahman* statements, that is to say, as it is there through intent. In other words, each statement collapses by itself, meaning that each is rendered false by being true. Further, as their truthfulness is their undoing they are also redeemed *māyā*-wise through the same truthfulness. The relativism involved in the Mādhyamika position issues in the absolutism of *śūnyatā*, which strictly from the standpoint of dialectics alone seems to be a negative one; the possibility of an ontology of *śūnya*, arising from *śūnyatā* will have to depend upon factors above and beyond sheer dialectics.

In the Buddhist idealist schools, then, in order to make talk significant some limitation needs to be imposed on the process of dialectics. In the Vedantic idealism the significance of talk is no problem; it is the non-

contradictory possibility of it that is at issue. The question is whether *śūnyatā* or *śūnya* provides such limitation and thereby significance. It would seem that such cannot be the case although *śūnya* is called *paramārthasatya* (absolute reality). In the absence of a real ontological limitor to the process of mutual, dialectical demolition of stated points of view, it is *saṁvṛti* itself that performs this role. It is in this context that a distinction between *lokasaṁvṛti* (*saṁvṛti* founded on the empirical world) and *alokasaṁvṛti* (*saṁvṛti* not founded on the empirical world) had to be invented in order to contain the potentiality towards infinite regress and therefore meaninglessness resident in the very concept in question. In the Vedānta, on the contrary, limitation exists even before discourse begins; in fact it is the starting point as well as the goal. The limitor is *Brahman* itself, not *saṁvṛti* or *māyā*. Hence the importance of *vastutantra* and *śrutipramāna*. *Brahman* is speech (*vagvai Brahmeti*).[29] *Māyā-vāda* did not develop in Advaita Vedānta as an instrument for limitation of discourse as is quite definitely the case with *saṁvṛtivāda* in dialectical Buddhism. This, then has been an effort on our part to answer the question as to what motivated the articulation of the theory of *māyā*.

V. A MISUNDERSTANDING DISPELLED

Simply in the interest of accurate exposition, not partisan defense, a very wide-spread misunderstanding needs to be dispelled. *Māyā* does not mean denial of the world. The ultimate non-being of the world does not have to be stated as a theory, as it is strictly implied in the very definition of *Brahman* itself. As a theory it only seeks to translate the implicit into the explicit, thereby necessitating the complete phenomenological tracing, or retracing, of the paths through which the world-appearance has come into being. *Māyā*, therefore, is a provisional recovery of the world so that its ultimate non-being, along with *Brahman's* being, may be spoken. Explicit speaking of its non-existence is indirect recognition of its phenomenal existence. Here, again, it is unquestionable that phenomenal reality comes into being through speech. *Māyā* will last as long as *Brahman* can be spoken and the world will last as long as *māyā* will last. The world has the same power of endurance and the same degree of reality that empiricists are willing to ascribe to it. Accordingly, and to this extent, *māyāvāda* is even consistent with an empiricist view of the world. It is possible for Advaita Vedānta to accept the reality *of* the world although not reality *as* the world; this is a crucial difference from empiricism. *Brahman* stands over against the world,

and *māyā* is the ground of the provisional distinction between the world and *Brahman*, all distinctions being provisonal. Out of the distinctions surely arises *Brahman* as the real but it is not the ground of distinction but of non-distinction.

To treat *māyā* as illusion is to misunderstand it. Truly speaking, it is the cosmic condition of which illusion is the model. All descriptions of *māyā* are given through analogy with human illusory experiences but to identify the terms of analogy is to mistake its purpose. Śaṅkara is very emphatic about the factual reality of the things that are mistaken for something else. The rope that is seen as snake is the objective foundation of the illusion.[30] Likewise, to reverse it, the water that we see in a mirage is unreal but the water that we use is real.[31]

No word of explanation is necessary for omitting some of the more well known aspects of *māyāvāda* for example that pertaining to name and form (*nāmarūpa*), as the project undertaken here is not meant to be an exhaustive treatment. The purpose has been simply to bring out some points not often recognized.

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NOTES

[1] The later Vedānta works like *Advaita-siddhi, Bhāmatī, Vedānta-paribhāṣā, Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṁgraha, Pancapādikā*, etc., have been responsible for its elaborate and intricate development. A comprehensive idea of this can be obtained from Ashutosh B. Shastri, *Studies in Post-Śaṅkara Dialectics*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1936; and T.R.V. Murti, *'Ajñāna – One or Many'*, Malkani, G.R., Das, R. and Murti, T.R.V., *Ajñāna*, Luzac & Co., London, 1933.

[2] *Aupaniṣadasya . . . nirmokṣa saṁkā svapne 'pi na upajāyate, Bhāṣya on Brahma-sūtra*. II, 2.10.

[3] *na tapter eva taptim abhyupagacchasi. ibid.*

[4] *'Ajñāna – One or Many', op. cit.*, pp. 122-23.

[5] *Vyavahāre tu yatra tathā dṛṣṭaḥ tapya tāpakabhāvaḥ tatra tathaiva sa iti. Bhāsya on Brahma Sūtra*, II, 2.10.

[6] *Yathā hi kaścit bhuñjāno bhujisādhyāyām tṛptau svayamanubhūyamānāyām evam brūyānnāham bhuñje na vā tṛpyāmīti, tadvad indriyasaṁnikarṣeṇa svayamupalabhamāna eva bāhyamarthaṁ nāham upalabhe na ca so'stīti bruvan katham upādeyavacanaḥ syāt. Ibid.*, II, 2.24.

[7] cf. *ibid.*, II, 2.29.

[8] *Naitad buddhena bhāṣitam* (this was not spoken by Buddha). *Māṇḍukya Kārikā* IV, 99. Śaṅkara, commenting on this passage, puts his stamp of approval on it.

[9] This is an ever present theme. Cf. *Nityaprakāśasvarūpaiva savitā . . . na jñānāntaram apekṣate* (eternally self-luminous like the sun . . . does not depend upon any other knowledge). Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya on Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, III, 33; also Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya on Brahma Sūtra*, I.1.5.

[10] Cf. Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya on Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VIII.1.1.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] Cf. Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya on Praśna Upaniṣad*, V. 7.

[13] Cf. Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya on Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, L. 37.

[14] Cf. Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya on Praśna Upaniṣad*, V. 2.

[15] Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya on Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I.2.14.

[16] Cf. *Bhāṣya on Brahma Sūtra*, I.4.22.

[17] *Ibid.*, I.1.4.

[18] *Ibid.*, III.2.17.

[19] Note: One must detect a faint similarity with Socratic irony here as expressed in dialogues concerning Virtue for example. Kierkegaard says eloquently, "if one must warn against irony as a seducer, one must also praise it as a guide." *The Concept of Irony* (transl. by L.M. Chapel), Harper & Row, New York, 1965, p. 339. His interpretation of irony as 'a mastered moment' teaching us to 'actualize actuality' (rather than idolize it) seems to fit this context very well.

[20] *Neti, neti. Bṛhadāraṇyaka* II.3.6.

[21] *anyad eva taḍ viditāḍ atho aviditād adhi. Kena*, I.4.

[22] *yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha. Taittirīya*, II.9.1.

[23] *Māyā hi esā māyā sṛṣṭa yanmān paśyati nārada. Sarvagunair yuktam naiva mām jñātumarhasi. Bhāsya on Brahma Sūtra*, III.2.17.

[24] *Avidyālakṣana anādimāyā.* Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya on Māṇḍūkya Kārikā,* III. 36.

[25] Note: This aspect of Śaṅkara's thought is often neglected by scholars, but we will become impressed with its great importance when we realize that *Īśvara*, described as *mahāmayin (Bhāṣya on Brahma Sūtra*, II.1.37 etc.) is no negligible category for him.

[26] *Asya ajñānasya āvaraṇavikṣepanāmakam asti śaktidvayam. Vedāntasāra*, 52.

[27] *Sākṣi ca avidyā-vṛttipratibimba caitanyaṃ. Advaitasiddhi.*

[28] Professor T. R. V. Murti deals with this problem in 'Some Thoughts on the Indian Philosophy of Language', being the presidential address at the 37th session of Indian Philosophical Congress (Chandigarh), 1963, pp. xxiff. He suggests a possible solution in taking 'resource to a hierarchy of languages' or 'at least two levels of languages'.

[29] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad,* IV.1.2.

[30] *Rajjur api sarvavikalpasyāspadībhūta.* Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya on Māṇḍūkya Kārikā,* II. 32; III. 29.

[31] *Sacca paramārthakodakādi, asacca marīcyodakādi.* Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya on Praśna Upaniṣad*, IV.

INDEX